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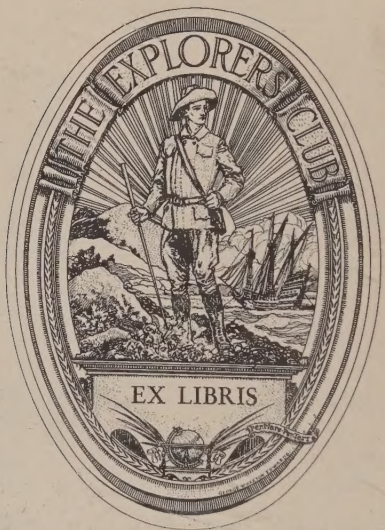

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ORIENTAL SERIES

RUSSIA

RUSSIA OF TO-DAY

VOLUME III

BY

LUIGI VILLARI

VOLUME XXIV

THE TREE OF THE JANNIZARIES

J. B. MILLET COMPANY
BOSTON AND TOKYO

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EDITORIAL NOTE

IN the present volume the monumental labours of Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace are brought to a close by a masterly survey of the condition of the Russian judicature, contained in the chapter on The New Law Courts, and the story of Russia of to-day is presented by Signor Luigi Villari. The work of this distinguished author may be best described in his own words. He says: "It has been my object to examine the consequences of the war (with Japan) on the internal condition (of Russia) both economic and political. For this purpose I consulted a number of people in all ranks of life whom I thought could give me information — officials, foreign diplomats and consuls, university professors, and, above all, practical men of business and manufacturers, who are in closest touch with the real conditions of the nation. I have not attempted to write a general treatise on Russia, dealing with all the aspects of national existence, both because there are so many excellent works of that character, beginning with Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace's masterpiece, and because to do so would require a much greater knowledge of the country than I could pretend to have acquired in the time. I do not profess to be in the confidence of Grand Dukes, Ministers of State, or Nihilist conspirators. I have limited myself to recording a traveller's impressions of Russia, giving especial prominence to the economic side of the subject — the condition of Russian industry, the state

of the peasantry, the development of an industrial population, the rise of a labour movement, and the reflection of the war on all these various elements and on public opinion generally. Here and there I have dealt with certain special aspects of Russian life, which, although not directly connected with the war, are yet interesting in themselves, and not very widely known to the ordinary reader.

"Unless all the auguries should prove false, all the signs of the times deceptive, the war with Japan should mark the transition of Russia from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, from the Eastern to the Western world, from barbarism to civilisation. All this is due to the general awakening of large classes of Russians, not to the work of mysterious secret societies, about whose organisation, funds, and plans sensational writers on Russian affairs wax so eloquent. The task commenced by Peter the Great, and continued by Catherine II. and Alexander II., is about to be completed, and we now see this vast mass of people, uneducated and elemental as yet, seething in the melting-pot of political and social change, about to develop into something new and unknown. It is a profoundly interesting moment in the nation's history, in which new forces, new ideas, and new movements are beginning to take shape. But we must not expect to see the results immediately, and to find Russia settling down under a liberal constitution within six months. The English Revolution lasted from 1640 to 1689 [that of America from 1765 to 1783. — Ed.]; that of France from 1789 to 1815 — almost to 1871; that of Italy from 1821 to 1870. Russia, too, will probably have to go through a long period of turmoil and unrest before she can find lasting peace."

EDITORIAL NOTE

Signor Villari is too modest in his estimate of his work. In the selection of material for this series, the work of all who have written of conditions in Modern Russia has been carefully examined, and none has been found which presents a more true, more just, or more vivid picture of present day conditions than is found in this volume.

CHARLES WELSH.

RUSSIA

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VOL. III

RUSSIA OF TO-DAY

CHAPTER I

THE NEW LAW COURTS

IN early times the dispensation of justice in Russia, as in other states of a primitive type, had a thoroughly popular character. The State was still in its infancy, and the duty of defending the person, the property, and the rights of individuals lay, of necessity, chiefly on the individuals themselves. Self-help formed the basis of the judicial procedure, and the State merely assisted the individual to protect his rights and to avenge himself on those who voluntarily infringed them.

By the rapid development of the autocratic power all this was changed. Autocracy endeavoured to drive and regulate the social machine by its own unaided force, and regarded with suspicion and jealousy all spontaneous action in the people. The dispensation of justice was accordingly appropriated by the central authority, absorbed into the Administration, and withdrawn from public control. Themis retired from the market-place, shut herself up in a dark room from which the contending par-

ties and the public gaze were rigorously excluded, surrounded herself with secretaries and scribes who put the rights and claims of the litigants into whatever form they thought proper, weighed according to her own judgment the arguments presented to her by her own servants, and came forth from her seclusion merely to present a ready-made decision or to punish the accused whom she considered guilty.

This change, though perhaps to some extent necessary, was attended with very bad consequences. Freed from the control of the contending parties and of the public, the courts acted as uncontrolled human nature generally does. Injustice, extortion, bribery, and corruption assumed gigantic proportions, and against these evils the Government found no better remedy than a system of complicated formalities and ingenious checks. The judicial functionaries were hedged in by a multitude of regulations, so numerous and complicated that it seemed impossible for even the most unjust judge to swerve from the path of uprightness. Explicit, minute rules were laid down for investigating facts and weighing evidence; every scrap of evidence and every legal ground on which the decision was based were committed to writing; every act in the complicated process of coming to a decision was made the subject of a formal document, and duly entered in various registers; every document and register had to be signed and countersigned by various officials who were supposed to control each other; every decision might be carried to a higher court and

made to pass a second time through the bureaucratic machine. In a word, the legislature introduced a system of formal written procedure of the most complicated kind, in the belief that mistakes and dishonesty would be thereby rendered impossible.

It may be reasonably doubted whether this system of judicial administration can anywhere give satisfactory results. It is always found by experience that in tribunals from which the healthy atmosphere of publicity is excluded justice languishes, and a great many ugly plants shoot up with wonderful vitality. Languid indifference, an undiscriminating spirit of routine, and unblushing dishonesty invariably creep in through the little chinks and crevices of the barrier raised against them, and no method of hermetically sealing these chinks and crevices has yet been invented. The attempt to close them up by increasing the formalities and multiplying the courts of appeal and revision merely adds to the tediousness of the procedure, and withdraws the whole process still more completely from public control. At the same time the absence of free discussion between the contending parties renders the task of the judge enormously difficult. If the system is to succeed at all, it must provide a body of able, intelligent, thoroughly-trained jurists, and must place them beyond the reach of bribery and other forms of corruption.

In Russia neither of these conditions was fulfilled. Instead of endeavouring to create a body of well-trained jurists, the Government went further and

further in the direction of letting the judges be chosen for a short period by popular election from among men who had never received a juridical education, or a fair education of any kind; whilst the place of judge was so poorly paid, and stood so low in public estimation, that the temptations to dishonesty were difficult to resist.

The practice of choosing the judges by popular election was an attempt to restore to the courts something of their old popular character; but it did not succeed for very obvious reasons. Popular election in a judicial organisation is useful only when the courts are public and the procedure simple; on the contrary, it is positively prejudicial when the procedure is in writing and extremely complicated. And so it proved in Russia. The elected judges, unprepared for their work and liable to be changed at short intervals, rarely acquired a knowledge of law or procedure. They were for the most part poor, indolent, landed proprietors, who did little more than sign the decisions prepared for them by the permanent officials. Even when a judge happened to have some legal knowledge he found small scope for its application, for he rarely, if ever, examined personally the materials out of which a decision was to be elaborated. The whole of the preliminary work, which was in reality the most important, was performed by minor officials under the direction of the secretary of the court. In criminal cases, for instance, the secretary examined the written evidence — all evidence was taken down

in writing — extracted what he considered the essential points, arranged them as he thought proper, quoted the laws which were in his opinion applicable to the case, put all this into a report, and read the report to the judges. Of course the judges, if they had no personal interest in the decision, accepted the secretary's view of the case. If they did not, all the preliminary work had to be done anew by themselves — a task that few judges were able, and still fewer willing, to perform. Thus the decision lay virtually in the hands of the secretary and the minor officials who were entrusted with the getting up of the case. And in general neither the secretary nor the minor officials were fit persons to have such power. There is no need to detail here the ingenious expedients by which they increased their meagre salaries, and how they generally contrived to extract money from both parties. Suffice it to say that in general the chancelleries of the courts were dens of pettifogging rascality.[1]

These defects and abuses were so flagrant that they became known even to the Emperor Nicholas, and made him conceive the design of thoroughly reforming the judicial organisation. For this purpose the existing laws were collated, reduced to system, and published in the form of a Code. At the same time projects were formed for the simplification of the

[1] Old book-catalogues sometimes mention a play bearing the significant title, "The Unheard-of Wonder; or, the Honest Secretary" (*Neslýkhannoe Dyélo ili Tchestny Sekretár*). I have never seen this curious production, but I have no doubt that it referred to the peculiarities of the old judicial procedure.

procedure. The work, however, proceeded slowly, and was in a languid, moribund condition, when it was suddenly animated by the reform enthusiasm, which broke out at the commencement of the present reign. Whilst the Emancipation question was being discussed in the Provincial Committees, the Council of State examined the question of judicial reform "from the historical, the theoretical, and the practical point of view," and came to the conclusion that the existing organisation must be completely transformed.

The commission appointed to consider this important matter filed a lengthy indictment against the existing system, and pointed out no less than twenty-five radical defects. To remove these it proposed that the judicial organisation should be completely separated from all other branches of the Administration; that the most ample publicity, with trial by jury in criminal cases, should be introduced into the tribunals; that Justice of Peace Courts should be created for petty affairs; and that the procedure in the ordinary courts should be greatly simplified.

These fundamental principles were published by Imperial command on September 29th, 1862 — a year and a half after the publication of the Emancipation Manifesto — and on November 20th, 1864, the new legislation founded on these principles received the Imperial confirmation.

Like most institutions erected on a *tabula rasa*, the new system is at once simple and symmetrical. As a whole, the architecture of the edifice is decidedly

French, but here and there we may detect unmistakable symptoms of English influence. It is not, however, a servile copy of any older edifice; and it may be fairly said that, though every individual part has been fashioned according to a foreign model, the whole has a certain originality.

The lower part of the building is composed of two great sections, distinct from, and independent of, each other — on the one hand the Justice of Peace Courts, and on the other the Regular Tribunals. Both sections contain an Ordinary Court and a Court of Appeal. The upper part of the building, covering equally both sections, is the Senate as Supreme Court of Revision (*Cour de Cassation*).

The distinctive character of the two independent sections may be detected at a glance. The function of the Justice of Peace Courts is to decide petty cases that involve no abstruse legal principles, and to settle, if possible by conciliation, those petty conflicts and disputes which arise naturally in the relations of everyday life; the function of the Regular Tribunals is to take cognisance of those graver affairs in which the fortune or honour of individuals or families is more or less implicated, or in which the public tranquillity is seriously endangered. The two kinds of courts have been organised in accordance with these intended functions. In the former the procedure is simple and conciliatory, the jurisdiction is confined to cases of little importance, and the judges are chosen by popular election, generally from among the local inhabitants. In the latter

there is more of "the pomp and majesty of the law." The procedure is more strict and formal, the jurisdiction is unlimited with regard to the importance of the cases, and the judges are trained jurists nominated by the Emperor.

The jurisdiction of the Justice of Peace Courts comprehends all obligations and civil injuries in which the sum at stake is not more than 500 roubles — about $330 — and all criminal affairs in which the legal punishment does not exceed 300 roubles — about $50 — or one year of imprisonment. When any one has a complaint to make, he may go to the Justice of the Peace (*Mirovói Sudyá*) and explain the affair orally, or in writing, without observing any formalities; and if the complaint seems well founded, the Justice at once fixes a day for hearing the case, and gives the other party notice to appear at the appointed time. When the time appointed arrives, the affair is discussed publicly and orally, either by the parties themselves, or by any representatives whom they may appoint. If it is a civil suit, the Justice begins by proposing to the parties to terminate it at once by a compromise, and indicates what he considers a fair arrangement. Many affairs are terminated in this simple way. If, however, either of the parties refuses to consent to a compromise, the matter is fully discussed, and the Justice gives a formal written decision, containing the grounds on which it is based. In criminal cases the amount of punishment is always determined by reference to a special Criminal Code.

If the sum at issue exceeds thirty roubles — about $20 — or if the punishment exceeds a fine of fifteen roubles — about $10 — or three days of arrest, an appeal may be made to the Assembly of Justices (*Mirovói Syezd*). This is a point in which English rather than French institutions were taken as a model. According to the French system, all appeals from a Juge de Paix are made to the "Tribunal d'Arrondissement," and the Justice of Peace Courts are thereby subordinated to the Regular Tribunals. According to the English system, certain cases may be carried on appeal from the Justice of the Peace to the Quarter Sessions. This latter principle was adopted and greatly developed by the Russian legislation. The Monthly Sessions, composed of all the Justices of the District (*Uyézd*), consider appeals against the decisions of the individual Justices. The procedure is simple and informal, as in the lower court, but an assistant of the Procureur must always be present. This functionary gives his opinion in some civil and in all criminal cases immediately after the debate, and the Court takes his opinion into consideration in forming its decision.

In the other great section of the judicial organisation — the Regular Tribunals — there are likewise Ordinary Courts and Courts of Appeal, called respectively "Tribunaux d'Arrondissement" (*Okruzhniye Sūdý*) and "Palais de Justice" (*Sudébniya Paláty*). Each Ordinary Court has jurisdiction over several Districts (*Uyézdy*), and the jurisdiction of each Court of Appeal comprehends several Provinces.

The relation, however, between the higher and the lower court in the two cases is not identical. In the Regular Tribunals *all* civil cases are subject to appeal, however small the sum at stake may be, and criminal cases are decided *finally* by the lower court with the aid of a jury. Thus in criminal affairs the "Palais de Justice" is not at all a court of appeal, but as no regular criminal prosecution can be raised without its formal consent, it controls in some measure the action of the lower courts.

As the general reader cannot be supposed to take an interest in the details of civil procedure, I shall merely say on this subject that in both sections of the Regular Tribunals the cases are always tried by at least three judges, the sittings are public, and oral debates by officially-recognised advocates form an important part of the proceedings. I venture, however, to speak a little more at length regarding the change which has been made in the criminal procedure — a subject that is less technical and more interesting for the uninitiated.

Down to the time of the recent judicial reforms the procedure in criminal cases was secret and inquisitorial. The accused had little opportunity of defending himself, but on the other hand the State took endless formal precautions against condemning the innocent. The practical consequences of this system was that an innocent man might remain for years in prison until the authorities convinced themselves of his innocence, whilst a clever criminal might indefinitely postpone his condemnations.

In studying the history of criminal procedure in foreign countries, those who were entrusted with the task of preparing projects of reform found that nearly every country of Europe had experienced the evils from which Russia was suffering, and that one country after another had come to the conviction that the most efficient means of removing these evils was to replace the inquisitorial by litigious procedure, to give a fair field and no favour to the prosecutor and the accused, and allow them to fight out their battle with whatever legal weapons they might think fit. Further it was discovered that according to the most competent foreign authorities, it was well in this modern form of judicial combat to leave the decision to a jury of respectable citizens. The steps which Russia had to take were thus clearly marked out by the experience of other nations, and it was decided that they should be taken at once. The organs for the prosecution of supposed criminals were carefully separated from the judges on the one hand, and from the police on the other; oral discussions between the Public Prosecutor and the prisoner's counsel, together with oral examination and cross-questioning of witnesses, were introduced into the procedure; and the jury was made an essential factor in criminal trials.

When a case, whether civil or criminal, has been decided in the Justice of Peace Courts or in the Regular Tribunals, there is no possibility of appeal in the strict sense of the term, but an application may be made for a revision of the case on the ground

of technical informality. To use the French terms, there cannot be *appel*, but there may be *cassation*. If the law has evidently been misinterpreted or misapplied, if there has been any omission or transgression of essential legal formalities, or if the Court has overstepped the bounds of its legal authority, the injured party may make an application to have the case revised and tried again. This is not, according to French juridical conceptions, an appeal. The Court of Revision[1] (*Cour de Cassation*) does not enter into the material facts of the case, but merely decides the question as to whether the essential formalities have been duly observed, and as to whether the law has been properly interpreted and applied; and if it be found on examination that there is some ground for invalidating the decision, it does not decide the case, but merely hands it over to be tried anew. According to the new Russian system, the Senate is the sole Court of Revision, alike for the Justice of Peace Courts and for the Regular Tribunals.

The Senate thus forms the regulator of the whole judicial system, but its action is merely regulative. It takes cognisance only of what is presented to it, and supplies to the machine no motive power. If any of the lower courts should work slowly or cease to work altogether, the Senate might remain ignorant of the fact, and certainly could take no official

[1] I am quite aware that the term "Court of Revision" is equivocal, but I have no better term to propose, and I hope that the above explanations will prevent confusion.

notice of it. It was considered necessary, therefore, to supplement the spontaneous vitality of the lower courts, and for this purpose was created a special centralised judicial administration, at the head of which was placed the Minister of Justice. The Minister is "Procureur-Général," and has a subordinate in each of the courts. The primary function of this administration is to preserve the force of the law, to detect and repair all infractions of judicial order, to defend the interests of the State and of those persons who are officially recognised as incapable of taking charge of their own affairs, and to act in criminal matters as Public Prosecutor. Besides this, it has acquired, partly by legislation and partly by the force of circumstances, a secondary function, of which I shall have something to say when I come to speak of the autonomy and independence of the courts.

Viewed as a whole, and from a little distance, this grand judicial edifice seems perfectly symmetrical, but a closer and more minute inspection shows that the apparent harmony of detail is obtained by means of blind windows, false doors, and other artistic falsehoods. Nay, more, there are unmistakable signs of a change of plan during the process of construction. Though the work lasted only about half-a-dozen years, the style of the upper differs from the style of the lower parts, precisely as in those Gothic cathedrals which grew up slowly during the course of centuries. And there is nothing here that need surprise us, for a considerable change

had taken place in the opinions of the official world during that short period. The reform was conceived at a time of uncritical enthusiasm for advanced liberal ideas, of boundless faith in the dictates of science, of unquestioning reliance on public spirit, public control, and public honesty — a time in which it was believed that the public would spontaneously do everything necessary for the common good, if it were only freed from the administrative swaddling-clothes in which it had been hitherto bound. Still smarting from the severe régime of Nicholas, men thought more about protecting the rights of the individual than about preserving public order, and under the influence of the socialistic ideas in vogue, malefactors were regarded as the unfortunate, involuntary victims of social equality and injustice. Towards the end of the period all this had begun to change. Many were beginning to perceive that liberty might easily turn to license, that the spontaneous public energy was chiefly expended in empty words, and that a certain amount of hierarchical discipline was necessary in order to keep the public administration in motion. It was found, therefore, in 1864, that it was impossible to carry out to their ultimate consequences the general principles laid down and published in 1862. Even in those parts of the legislation which were actually put in force, it was found necessary to make modifications in an indirect covert way. Of these, one may be cited by way of illustration. In 1860 criminal inquiries were taken out of the hands of

the police, and transferred to "Juges d'Instruction" (*Sudébniye Slêdovateli*), who were almost entirely independent of the Public Prosecutor, and could not be removed unless condemned for some legal transgression by a Regular Tribunal. This reform created at first much rejoicing and great expectations, because it raised a barrier against the tyranny of the police and against the arbitrary power of the higher officials. But very soon the defects of the system became apparent. Many "Juges d'Instruction," feeling themselves independent, and knowing that they would not be prosecuted except for some flagrantly illegal act, gave way to indolence, and spent their time in inactivity. A flagrant case of this kind came under my own observation. In such cases it was always difficult, and sometimes impossible, to procure a condemnation — for indolence must assume gigantic proportions in order to become a crime — and the minister had to adopt the practice of appointing, without Imperial confirmation, temporary "Juges d'Instruction" whom he could remove at pleasure.

It is unnecessary, however, to enter into these theoretical defects. The important question for the general public is: How do the institutions work in the local conditions in which they are placed?

This is a question which has an interest not only for Russians, but for all students of social science, for it tends to throw light on the difficult subject as to how far institutions may be successfully transplanted to a foreign soil. Many thinkers hold, and not without reason, that no institution can work

well unless it is the natural product of previous historical development. Now we have here an opportunity of testing this theory by experience; we have even what Bacon terms an *experimentum crucis*. This new judicial system is an artificial creation constructed in accordance with principles elaborated by foreign jurists. All that the elaborators of the project said about the historical point of view was mere talk. In reality they made a *tabula rasa* of the existing organisation. If the introduction of public oral procedure and trial by jury was a return to ancient institutions, it was a return to what had been long since forgotten by all except antiquarian specialists, and no serious attempt was made to develop what actually existed. One form, indeed, of oral procedure had been preserved in the Code, but it had fallen completely into disuse, and seems to have been overlooked by the elaborators of the new system.

Having in general little confidence in institutions which spring ready-made from the brains of autocratic legislators, I expected to find that this new judicial organisation, which looks so well on paper, was well-nigh worthless in reality. Observation, however, has not confirmed my pessimistic expectations. On the contrary, I have found that these new institutions, though they have not yet had time to strike deep root, and are very far from being perfect even in the human sense of the term, work on the whole remarkably well, and have already conferred immense benefit on the country.

THE NEW LAW COURTS

Though scarcely ten years have passed since the reforms began to be introduced — they have not yet been introduced into many parts of the empire — the Justice of Peace Courts, which may perhaps be called the newest part of the new institution, have already become thoroughly acclimatised as if they had existed for generations. At first neither the people nor the Justices themselves had a very clear conception of the true function of these courts. Many peasants regarded the Justice as they had been wont to regard kindly proprietors of the old patriarchal type, and brought their griefs and sorrows to him in the hope that he would somehow alleviate them. Often they submitted most intimate domestic and matrimonial concerns, of which no court could possibly take cognisance, and sometimes they demanded the fulfilment of contracts which were in flagrant contradiction not only with the written law, but also with ordinary morality.[1] Some of the Justices were guilty of aberrations of a different kind. Imagining that their mission was to eradicate the conceptions and habits which had been created and fostered by serfage, they sometimes used their authority for giving lessons in philanthropic liberalism, and took a malicious delight in wounding the susceptibilities, and occasionally even the material interests, of those whom they regarded as enemies to the good cause. In dis-

[1] Many curious instances of this have come to my knowledge, but they are of such a kind that they cannot be quoted in a work intended for the general public.

putes between master and servant, or between employer and workmen, the Justice of this type considered it his duty to resist the tyranny of capital, and was apt to forget his official character of judge in his assumed character of social reformer. Happily these misconceptions on the part of the people, and these aberrations on the part of the Justices, are rapidly disappearing, and will probably be ere long a thing of the past.

The Regular Tribunals have likewise become acclimatised in an incredibly short space of time. The judges are not generally by any means profound jurists, and are too often deficient in that dispassionate calmness which we are accustomed to associate with the Bench; but they are at least honest, educated men, and generally possess a fair knowledge of the law. Their chief defects are to be explained by the fact that the demand for trained jurists has far exceeded the supply, and the Government has been forced to nominate many men who, under ordinary circumstances, would never have thought of presenting themselves as candidates. At the beginning of 1870, in the 32 "Tribunaux d'Arrondissement" which then existed, there were 227 judges, of whom 44 had never received a juridical education. Even the presidents have not all passed through a school of law. Of course the courts cannot become thoroughly effective until all the judges are men who have received a good special education, and have a practical acquaintance with judicial matters. This will doubtless be effected in time, and

already it may be confidently predicted that the second generation of judges will be better prepared and more capable than their predecessors.

Descending from the Bench to the Bar, we find less reason for satisfaction. The new system cannot be successfully worked without a large body of able, respectable, trustworthy advocates, and such a body has not yet been formed. In criminal affairs any one may act as counsel. In civil practice there are two kinds of advocates: regular Barristers (*Prisiázhniye povêrenniye*) and licensed practitioners. The former are always men who have passed through a school of law; the latter require no educational qualification, except the passing of an examination, which is a mere empty formality. In both of these classes are to be found a certain number of men well qualified for the duties they have to perform, but very many even of the regular barristers have still to learn the elementary principles of judicial debating. Above all, they have to learn the simple rule of sticking to their brief. It is no unfrequent occurrence — especially in cases which attract public attention — that the counsel cannot resist the temptation of showing off newly-acquired learning, and making references to French, German, or English legislation, which do not in the least elucidate the matter in hand. This tendency appears most frequently among the very young men, and the fact may to some extent be explained by the present system of juridical education. Instead of expounding carefully the law of the land, the professors too

often indulge in vague disquisitions and criticisms, with frequent reference to foreign legislations, so that many students at the end of their law course have acquired merely a chaotic muddle of general principles, foreign systems, juridical philosophy, and political economy, and a most imperfect acquaintance with actual Russian law and procedure.

Regarded from the moral point of view the Bar does not present more matter for congratulation. I do not at all share the views of those who consider barristers very wicked men because they seek to conceal the weak points of their case and employ the recognised devices of forensic strategy; but I think that every barrister should be animated with a feeling of professional honour and professional dignity, and that the professional moral standard should be raised as high as possible. Now it seems to me that the professional moral standard of the Bar in Russia is still in an embryonic state, and that the individual members are, almost without exception, animated by a rapaciously commercial, mercenary spirit. The advocate generally makes with his client a formal contract, according to which he receives a large sum in the event of winning the case, and a moderate remuneration if he is unsuccessful. In criminal affairs it is often expressly stipulated that the remuneration shall be in the inverse ratio of the severity of the sentence. The prisoner promises, for instance, after perhaps a good deal of hard bargaining, to pay 10,000 roubles if he is acquitted, 5,000 if he is condemned to a year's imprisonment,

and 1,000 if he is transported for fifteen years to Siberia; and the advocate takes good care that a considerable part of the sum should be paid to him in advance. And this is not the worst — barristers not only sell their services as dear as possible, but sometimes use dishonest means for raising the price. One of the most common methods is to frighten the client by describing in vivid colours, or positively exaggerating, the dangers to which he is exposed. Another method is to demand, while the case is going on, a large sum for secret purposes — that is to say, for "greasing the palm" of influential officials. Both of these devices are unfortunately only too often successful. The old belief that litigation and criminal procedure are a kind of difficult game, in which victory must always be on the side of the most dexterous player, irrespective of justice and equity, and that bribery and back-door influence are indispensable for success, is still deeply rooted in the popular mind. Thus, among the people, especially the uneducated mercantile classes, there is a blind, childish faith in the omnipotence of the most celebrated advocates, and some of these, dexterously using this faith for their own ends, have succeeded in amassing large fortunes in an incredibly short space of time. The arrangements between counsel and client are, of course, generally kept secret, but even when ugly disclosures are inadvertently made, they attract little attention and excite little indignation. So lenient is public opinion in this respect that professional reputation

is not seriously affected by affairs which in England would lead to disbarring and disgrace. Symptoms of a change for the better have indeed already appeared. In St. Petersburg and Moscow the barristers have formed themselves into a corporation, administered by a council, which has the right to reprimand, rusticate, and expel. It cannot reasonably be expected, however, that such means can have a very deep or lasting influence unless they are supported by public opinion.

Of all the recent judicial innovations, perhaps the most interesting is the jury.

At the time of the reforms the introduction of the jury into the judicial organisation awakened among the educated classes a great amount of sentimental enthusiasm. The institution had the reputation of being "liberal," and was known to be approved of by the latest authorities in criminal jurisprudence. This was sufficient to insure it a favourable reception, and to excite most exaggerated expectations as to its beneficent influence. Ten years of experience have more than sufficed to cool this enthusiasm, and now voices may be heard declaring that the introduction of the jury was a mistake. It is now held by many that the Russian people is not yet ripe for such an institution, and numerous anecdotes are related in support of this opinion. One jury, for instance, is said to have returned a verdict of "*not* guilty with extenuating circumstances," and another, being unable to come to a decision, is reported to have cast lots before an

Icon, and to have given a verdict in accordance with the result! Besides this, juries often give a verdict of "not guilty" when the accused makes a full and formal confession to the court.

How far the comic anecdotes are true I do not undertake to decide, but I venture to assert that such incidents, if they really occur, are too few to form the basis of a serious indictment. The fact, however, that juries often acquit prisoners who openly confess their crime is beyond all possibility of doubt, and is therefore deserving of serious consideration.

To most Englishmen this fact will probably seem sufficient to prove that Russian society is not yet ripe for the institution, but before adopting this sweeping conclusion it will be well to examine the phenomenon a little more closely in connection with Russian criminal procedure as a whole.

In England the Bench is allowed very great latitude in fixing the amount of punishment. The jury can therefore confine themselves to the question of fact and leave to the judge the appreciation of extenuating circumstances. In Russia the position of the jury is different. The Russian criminal law fixes minutely the punishment for each category of crimes, and leaves almost no latitude to the judge. The jury know that if they give a verdict of guilty, the prisoner will inevitably be punished according to the Code. Now the Code, borrowed in great part from foreign legislation, is founded on conceptions very different from those of the Russian people,

and in many cases attaches severe punishment to acts which in the opinion of the Russian people are merely peccadilloes, or are positively justifiable. Even in those matters in which the Code is in harmony with the popular morality, there are many exceptional cases in which *summum jus* is really *summa injuria*. Suppose, for instance — as actually happened in a case which came under my notice — that a fire breaks out in a village, and that the Village Elder, driven out of patience by the apathy and laziness of some of his young fellow-villagers, oversteps the limits of his authority as defined by law, and accompanies his reproaches and exhortations with a few lusty blows. Surely such a man is not guilty of a very heinous crime — certainly he is not in the opinion of the peasantry — and yet if he be prosecuted and convicted he inevitably falls into the jaws of an Article which condemns to transportation for a long term of years. In such cases what are the jury to do? In England they might safely give a verdict of guilty, and leave the judge to take into consideration all the extenuating circumstances; but in Russia they cannot act in this way, for they know that the judge must condemn the prisoner according to the Criminal Code. There remains, therefore, but one issue out of the difficulty — a verdict of acquittal; and Russian juries — to their honour be it said — generally adopt this alternative. Thus the jury, in those very cases in which it is most severely condemned, provides a corrective for the injustice of the criminal legislation. Occa-

sionally, it is true, they go a little too far in this direction and arrogate to themselves a right of pardon, but cases of this kind are, I believe, very rare. I know of only one well-authenticated instance. The prisoner had been proved guilty of a serious crime, but it happened to be the eve of a great religious festival, and the jury thought that in pardoning the prisoner and giving a verdict of acquittal, they would be acting as good Christians!

The legislation regards, of course, this practice as an abuse, and has tried to prevent it by concealing as far as possible from the jury the punishment that awaits the accused if he be condemned. For this purpose it forbids the counsel for the prisoner to inform the jury what punishment is prescribed by the Code for the crime in question. This ingenious device not only fails in its object, but has sometimes a directly opposite effect. Not knowing what the punishment will be, and fearing that it may be out of all proportion to the crime, the jury sometimes acquit a criminal whom they would condemn if they knew what punishment would be inflicted. And when a jury is, as it were, entrapped, and finds that the punishment is more severe than it supposed, it can take its revenge in the succeeding cases. I know at least of one instance of this kind. A jury convicted a prisoner of an offence which it regarded as very trivial, but which in reality entailed, according to the Code, seven years of penal servitude! So surprised and frightened were the jurymen by this unexpected consequence of their verdict that they

obstinately acquitted, in the face of the most convincing evidence, all the other prisoners brought before them.

The defects, real and supposed, of the present system are commonly attributed to the predominance of the peasant element in the juries; and this opinion, founded on *à priori* reasoning, seems to many too evident to require verification. The peasantry are in many respects the most ignorant class, and therefore, it is assumed, they are least capable of weighing conflicting evidence. Plain and conclusive as this reasoning seems, it is in my opinion erroneous. The peasants have, indeed, little education, but they have a large fund of plain common sense; and experience proves — so at least I have been informed by many judges and public prosecutors — that, as a general rule, a peasant jury is more to be relied on than a jury drawn from the educated classes. It must be admitted, however, that a peasant jury has certain peculiarities, and it is not a little interesting to observe what those peculiarities are.

In the first place, a jury composed of peasants generally acts in a somewhat patriarchal fashion, and does not always confine its attention to the evidence and the arguments adduced at the trial. The members form their judgment as men do in the affairs of ordinary life, and are sure to be greatly influenced by any jurors who happen to be personally acquainted with the prisoner. If several of the jurors know him to be a bad character, he has little chance of being acquitted, even though the chain of evidence

against him should not be quite perfect. Peasants cannot understand why a notorious scoundrel should be allowed to escape because a little link in the evidence is wanting, or because some little judicial formality has not been duly observed. Indeed, their ideas of criminal procedure in general are extremely primitive. The Communal method of dealing with malefactors is best in accordance with their conceptions of well-regulated society. The Mir may, by a Communal decree and without a formal trial, have any of its unruly members transported to Siberia![1] This summary, informal mode of procedure seems to the peasants very satisfactory. They are at a loss to understand how a notorious culprit is allowed to "buy" an advocate to defend him, and are very insensible to the bought advocate's eloquence. To many of them, if I may trust to conversations which I have casually overheard in and around the courts, "buying an advocate" seems to be very much the same kind of operation as bribing a judge.

In the second place, the peasants, when acting as jurors, are very severe with regard to crimes against

[1] In describing the Mir I inadvertently omitted to mention this important right which it possesses. The peasants so transported are not sent to the mines, but are settled as colonists on unoccupied land in some distant region beyond the Ural Mountains. If this right of deportation is not very often used, it is partly because the Mir has to defray the necessary expenses, and partly because the members are afraid that the unarrested malefactor may, on discovering their intention, set fire to the village or revenge himself in some similar way. Setting fire to the village is popularly termed "letting go the red cock" (*pustít' krásnago petukhá*)—a phrase which corresponds to the old French expression, "les charpentiers rouges," well known before and during the Revolution.

property. In this they are instigated by the simple instinct of self-defence. They are, in fact, continually at the mercy of thieves and malefactors. They live in wooden houses easily set on fire; their stables might be broken into by a child; at night the village is guarded merely by an old man, who cannot be in more than one place at a time, and in the one place he is apt to go to sleep; a police-officer is rarely seen, except when a crime has actually been committed. A few clever horse-stealers may ruin many families, and a fire-raiser, in his desire to avenge himself on an enemy, may reduce a whole village to destitution. These and similar considerations tend to make the peasants very severe against theft, robbery, and arson; and a Public Prosecutor who desires to obtain a conviction against a man charged with one of these crimes endeavours to have a jury in which the peasant class is largely represented.

With regard to fraud in its various forms the peasants are much more lenient, probably because the line of demarcation between honest and dishonest dealing in commercial affairs is not very clearly drawn in their minds. Many, for instance, are convinced that trade cannot be successfully carried on without a little clever cheating; and hence cheating is regarded as a venial offence. If the money fraudulently acquired be restored to the owner, the crime is supposed to be completely condoned. Thus when a Volost Elder appropriates the public money, and succeeds in repaying it before the case comes

on for trial, he is invariably acquitted — and sometimes even re-elected!

An equal leniency is generally shown by peasants towards crimes against the person, such as assaults, cruelty, and the like. This fact is easily explained. Refined sensitiveness and a keen sympathy with physical suffering are the result of a certain amount of material well-being, together with a certain degree of intellectual and moral culture, and neither of these is yet possessed by the Russian peasantry. Any one who has had opportunities of frequently observing the peasants must have been often astonished by their indifference to suffering, both in their own persons and in the person of others. In a drunken brawl heads may be broken and wounds inflicted without any interference on the part of the spectators. If no fatal consequences ensue, the peasant does not think it necessary that official notice should be taken of the incident, and certainly does not consider that any of the combatants should be transported to Siberia. Slight wounds heal of their own accord without any serious loss to the sufferer, and therefore the man who inflicts them is not to be put on the same level as the criminal who reduces a family to beggary. This reasoning may, perhaps, shock people of sensitive nerves, but it undeniably contains a certain amount of plain, homely wisdom.

Of all kinds of cruelty, that which is perhaps most revolting to civilised mankind is the cruelty of the husband towards his wife; but to this crime the Russian peasant shows especial leniency. He is

still influenced by the old conceptions of the husband's rights, and by that low estimate of the weaker sex which finds expression in many popular proverbs. These proverbs are very numerous. The following may serve as an illustration: "In ten women there is but one soul"; "In women there is no soul, but only a vapour (*par*)"; "Women have long hair but short intelligence." In other popular sayings women are compared to serpents.

The peculiar moral conceptions reflected in these facts are evidently the result of external conditions, and not of any recondite ethnographical peculiarities, for they are not found among the merchants, who are nearly all of peasant origin. On the contrary, the merchants are more severe with regard to crimes against the person than with regard to crimes against property. The explanation of this is simple. The merchant has means of protecting his property, and if he should happen to suffer by theft, his fortune is not likely to be seriously affected by it. On the other hand, he has a certain sensitiveness with regard to such crimes as assault; for though he has commonly not much more intellectual and moral culture than the peasant, he is accustomed to comfort and material well-being, which naturally develop sensitiveness regarding physical pain.

Towards fraud the merchants are quite as lenient as the peasantry. This may, perhaps, seem strange, for fraudulent practices are sure in the long run to undermine trade. The Russian merchants, however,

have not yet arrived at this conception, and can point to many of the richest members of their class as a proof that fraudulent practices often create enormous fortunes. Long ago Samuel Butler justly remarked that "We damn the sins we have no mind to."

As the external conditions have little or no influence on the religious conceptions of the merchants and the peasantry, the two classes are equally severe with regard to those acts which are regarded as crimes against the Deity. Hence acquittals in cases of sacrilege, blasphemy, and the like never occur unless the jury is in part composed of educated men.

In their decisions, as in their ordinary modes of thought, the jurors drawn from the educated classes are little, if at all, affected by theological conceptions, but they are sometimes influenced in a not less unfortunate way by conceptions of a different order. It may happen, for instance, that a juror who has passed through one of the higher educational establishments has his own peculiar theory about the value of evidence, or he is profoundly impressed with the idea that it is better that a thousand guilty men should escape than that one innocent man should be punished, or he is imbued with sentimental pseudo-philanthropy, or he is convinced that punishments are useless because they neither cure the delinquent nor deter others from crime; in a word he may have in some way or other lost his mental balance in that moral chaos through which Russia

is at present passing. In England, France, or Germany such an individual would have little influence on his fellow-jurymen, for in these countries there are very few people who allow new paradoxical ideas to overturn their traditional notions and obscure their common sense; but in Russia, where even the elementary moral conceptions are singularly unstable and pliable, a man of this type may succeed in leading a jury. More than once I have heard men boast of having induced their fellow-jurymen to acquit every prisoner brought before them, not because they believed the prisoners to be innocent or the evidence to be insufficient, but because all punishments are useless and barbarous. Keeping facts of this kind in view, I cannot agree with those who hold that the English practice of demanding unanimity from the jury should be introduced into Russia.

One word in conclusion regarding the independence and political significance of the new courts. When the question of judicial reform was first publicly raised, many people hoped that the new courts would receive complete autonomy and real independence, and would thus form a foundation for political liberty. These hopes, like so many illusions of that strange time, have not been realised. A large measure of autonomy and independence was indeed granted in theory. The law laid down the principle that no judge could be removed unless convicted of a definite crime, and that the courts should present candidates for all the vacant places

on the bench; but these and similar rights have little practical significance. If the Minister cannot depose a judge, he can deprive him of all possibility of receiving promotion, tchins, decorations, and the like, and he can easily force him in an indirect way to send in his resignation; and if the courts have still the right to present candidates for vacant places, the Minister has also this right, and can, of course, always secure the nomination of his own candidate. By the influence of that centripetal force which exists in all centralised bureaucracies, the Procureurs have become more important personages than the Presidents of the courts, and the independence of the judges is little better than a mere name.

In thus limiting the independence and autonomy of the courts of justice, the Government is commonly supposed to have committed a heinous sin against the spirit of liberalism and progress. This may be in a certain sense true, but I am not sure that the fact is to be regretted. Self-government is no doubt an excellent thing in itself, and is especially necessary in Russia, but it is not a miracle-working panacea, and it rarely bears good fruit when planted suddenly among a people who have long been unaccustomed to it. The experiments hitherto made in Russia have not been very encouraging — especially in the universities, which are in many respects analogous to the courts. Any one who knows what may be called the *histoire intime* of the universities during the last few years may reasonably doubt whether the efficiency of the local courts would necessarily

be increased by conferring on them a larger measure of independence and autonomy. Their independence could not possibly have any political value so long as the Government can use the "administrative procedure." When the educated classes have acquired a little more genuine independence in other spheres of activity, and when a healthy, powerful, all-controlling public opinion has been created, it will be time enough, as it seems to me, to free the local tribunals from the control of the central authorities.

CHAPTER II[1]

ST. PETERSBURG

IT cannot be said that the first sight of the Russian capital is attractive. The neighbourhood of the docks is dreary, dirty, ill-kept, untidy, without being in the least picturesque. Long streets paved with cobbles, flanked by low houses of wood or plaster, usually painted a nondescript yellow or brown, with here and there a larger building; a gaunt, unkempt, pale-faced, blear-eyed population, whose most conspicuous articles of attire are their high boots; quantities of small carts of a primitive build, the shafts held together with an arched yoke, which is sometimes painted and ornamented. The central streets of St. Petersburg are naturally somewhat handsomer, but there is hardly anything that can be described as really fine or imposing. Even the famous Nevsky Prospekt is disappointing, in spite of its immense length and width. It is an endless street, nearly three miles long from the Admiralty to the convent of St. Alexander Nevsky, and save for one turn at the Znamenkaya Square, absolutely straight. There are some fine shops,

[1] This and the following chapters describing Russia of to-day are by Signor Luigi Villari.

and a few handsome buildings, which, however, are dwarfed by the width of the open spaces. The houses are painted in garish colours, and there is absolutely no architectural feature anywhere, save the Kazan Cathedral, which is an imitation of the St. Peter's in Rome, minus beauty of proportion. The group of palaces along the Neva and round the Admiralty are large and ugly; the Winter Palace in its yellowish pink hideousness stands out even among royal palaces as a monument of monstrosity. The view of Neva quays is the only part of the town which can be described as impressive, for the huge expanse of water lends a dignity even to the uninteresting buildings along the quays. The bridges are not without grandeur, and the general view of the mighty stream with its shipping, its gigantic masses of timber rafts, and the piles of pseudo-classic architecture produce a momentary impression of a really great world-city.

As for the people in the streets, they are a curious collection of types, although less interesting and varied than those whom one sees in Moscow. A large number are in uniform, for the Russian capital is swarming with officials, and all Russian officials, and a great many other people too, wear uniforms. Officers of the army or the navy, *employés* of the ministries, clerks of every Government department, university students, and even schoolboys, all are in some kind of *mundir* (uniform). Here and there one sees men with small eyes, high cheek-bones, and shaven heads barely covered by tiny black velvet

caps, attired in long frocks, black or grey, and loose trousers. These are Tartars from the Volga, of whom there are large numbers scattered about all over Russia. In St. Petersburg many of them are employed as waiters in restaurants, owing to their Mahometan sobriety and honesty, but they look very odd in swallow-tail coats and white ties. Others are wandering pedlars, who go about from house to house, buying up all kinds of cast-off clothing and second-hand goods, which they afterwards sell at the Alexandrovsky Rynok, of which more anon.

A great feature of the capital is the number of churches. At St. Petersburg one does not see Russian ecclesiastical architecture in its most characteristic aspects, as at Moscow or Kiev, but the churches in one respect are thoroughly typical of all those of the Orthodox faith — in their ostentation. The sacristan who takes the stranger round to inspect their curiosities has but two words with which they extol their beauty — "gold" and "silver." There are masses of gold or gilding, and silver, adorning huge *ikons*, doors, and screens, and many of the images are simply covered with jewels. Everything is of immense size — massive columns of granite, gigantic figures in mosaic, lofty domes, acres of marble, sheets of lapis lazuli, monstrous candelabra. A description of the contents of St. Isaac's cathedral calls to mind some account in the *New York Herald* of an American millionaire's wedding. And with all this splendour there is little really grand or imposing. There is a want of proportion or sobriety

about these monuments of devotion, and their wealth and gorgeousness are so preposterous that, like the huge jewels exposed on the person of a newly rich woman, they seem hardly real. Yet the intense devotion of the worshippers, their unanimity of prayer, are an impressive sight not easily forgotten.

St. Petersburg is not purely Russian, and a good deal of the misconception and ignorance of foreigners about Russia is due to their seeing so much of the capital and so little of the rest of the country. It certainly represents one aspect, one tendency, of Russia — the foreign element of its civilisation. As a foreign writer puts it, the Russian capital is a town with a German name built on a Finnish swamp. Its incongruities, its modernity combined with discomfort, its unfinished appearance, its gaps and empty spaces, its mixed population of Russians, Tartars, Finns, Germans, and foreigners, and its general air of untidiness, are characteristic of the Russian Government which it embodies. But if lacking in beauty and real dignity, and in spite of its modern appearance and its imitation of Paris and Berlin, in spite of electric light and lifts, and patches of wood pavement, St. Petersburg is still the capital of Russia, and it has sights and sounds hidden away in remote corners that are as thoroughly Russian and Oriental as anything within the Tsar's dominions. One of these is the Alexandrovsky Rynok, or Alexander's Market, popularly known as the "Thieves' Bazaar." The bazaar still plays a very large part in the commercial life of Russia, and business is

largely transacted in curious enclosures like rabbit-warrens, vividly recalling the markets of Stambul. St. Petersburg has several of these market-places, of which the most important is the *Gostinny Dvor*, a vast agglomeration of shops and warehouses opening on to the Nevsky Prospekt. Here business on a large scale is transacted, and the offices of some of the richest merchants of the city are interned in its courts and balconies. But the Alexandrovsky Rynok is far more curious, and characteristic of the Land of Contrasts. It is approached from the Voznesensky Prospekt, and externally it presents a row of uninteresting shops under covered arcades, with large doorways at intervals. You enter one of these and find yourself in a perfect labyrinth of passages, courts, and corners. The side ways are covered in with glass; but there is an open space in the middle. Architecturally the buildings have nothing remarkable about them: they are all two stories high, all plain, all more or less alike; they are not even picturesque in their untidiness and squalor. But it is the contents of the shops and the crowds of buyers and sellers who throng them which constitute one of the most curious spectacles in the Russian capital. It is not an ordinary second-hand bazaar, where you may occasionally pick up bric-a-brac amidst a great deal of rubbish; here you can see every imaginable kind of goods on sale in vast quantities, and not all of them second-hand. There are beautiful furs obtained goodness knows how, and old boots all in holes; there are fine pictures

by the best masters, and priceless majolica, side by side with battered tin kettles and cracked kitchen crockery; Limoges enamels and broken bicycles; Circassian swords and guns incrusted with silver and gold, and gramophones that won't 'phone; old Italian Renaissance furniture and broken, straw-backed chairs; English mezzotints for which Mr. Pierpont Morgan would give hundreds of guineas, and the most ghastly oleographs for which most people would give as many shillings to keep out of their sight. And the clothes! It would take pages to describe a tithe of the different kinds of garments and such stuff as clothes are made of here exhibited. Beautiful silks and rich brocades that may have been part of a princess's trousseau, together with the cheapest and commonest of cotton prints; exquisite Oriental embroideries that would not disgrace a Sultan's palace and the costumes of fifth-rate café concert *artistes*. Persian carpets of the choicest colours and rarest designs, possibly from the floors of a famous mosque, and gaudy rugs with representations of boys with hoops and smiling lions. There is enough in variety and in quantity here to furnish a Mayfair mansion, an Italian palace, or a cheap boarding-house. But there is a certain amount of method in this confusion. As in the bazaars of the real Orient, certain streets or parts of streets are devoted to one class of goods, others to another. It is only in certain quarters that miscellaneous wares of every kind are muddled up together. As for the people, the great mass of them are Tartars,

Jews, and a whole host of disreputable characters. The Tartars, hideous to look upon, in their long tunics, not unlike dilapidated frock-coats; the Jews, also in long caftans, with greasy curls and crafty eyes; among the others are Russians, Poles, Finns, Letts, Germans, but all of them the lowest of the low. The Tartars are usually the same whom you see wandering about from house to house, picking up everything they can buy, steal, or find, calling out "*Kalaah, kalatka!*" as their tunic is called in which they carry their purchases. The Jews are the keenest bargainers, and vie with the shrill-voiced harridans in enticing the passers-by to purchase their wares. The denizens of the market are found at every auction, at every sale. When the last scion of a great house descended from Rurik has spent the last hundred-rouble note he can squeeze out of a heavily mortgaged estate on cards, champagne, and music-hall singers, and is finally sold up, these Tartars and Jews are there like crows after a battle, to see if they cannot strike a bargain, and go back to their foul-smelling booths at the *Rynok*, laden with miscellaneous bundles. They do not care what they buy, nor whence it comes, nor at what price they sell it, provided only they get a good deal more than they paid for it. Any one who has stolen goods on his conscience comes here to dispose of them. Hence it is sometimes possible to pick up really valuable objects, and many a prudent and experienced collector has had reason to be well satisfied with a morning spent in the Thieves' Market.

These wild-eyed Megæra and these dirty Tartars are quick to distinguish the different types who pass their way; they can tell at a glance to whom to offer an enamelled gold watch or a piece of real old lace, and to whom a second-hand pair of trousers, baggy at the knees, is likely to prove acceptable. But you must be careful in making your purchases, not only from the fear of being swindled, or, incidentally, of having your pocket picked, but also because the vendors will not show their best treasures to the first comer; you must go again and again, evincing a languid interest in painted tea-boards, odd parts of telephone apparatuses, and such-like treasures, until you have won the shopman's confidence; then the really good picture or the handsome old silver ornament will be drawn out of its receptacle and shown to you with many nods and becks and wreathed smiles; and after two or three more days' bargaining you will go home a poorer but happier man.

In the middle of the market is a wide, open space surrounded by the usual shops: in the centre a church has been built, for even here religion must have its due, and in the galleries there are highly coloured pictures of flamboyant Madonnas and angels and alarming saints, which no good Russian passes without repeated signs of the cross. In the open square women and men of the Greek faith prostrate themselves on the ground before the church, and especial thanksgiving prayers are offered up whenever a good bargain has been struck, or a guileless

outsider handsomely "done in the eye." In this square there are quantities of hand-barrows and temporary booths, chiefly devoted to the sale of old boots, cheap lace, and common wearing apparel. Here the noise of the strident voices is deafening, and you are sometimes seized by half-a-dozen would-be sellers in their eagerness to make you look at their wares.

This place is like the end of all things, for it is here that the goods of those who have sunk in the world finally drift. The Tartars avenge themselves for having been conquered, and the Jews for being persecuted and despised, by making profit out of their task-master's misfortunes. The emancipation of the serfs, which deprived most of the landlords of a large part of their estates but gave them ready money instead, was the cause of ruin to many, who spent their newly acquired cash in the capital; and once having acquired a taste for Court life, they could not resign themselves to returning to the country, but mortgaged what remained of their land until they went under altogether. The wild speculation of the last twenty-five years often produced a similar result, and money easily earned was as easily squandered, and after the crash it was necessary to sell everything. This made the fortune of the Thieves' Market, and turned many of the Old Clo' men into millionaires. This year doubtless the harvest of the Thieves' Market will be even greater than usual, for the war, with the distress and misery following in its train, will surely

bring many valued treasures under the auctioneer's hammer. The collector from Western lands, if he has nothing better to do, might put in a week at St. Petersburg, and see what he can pick up at the Alexandrovsky Rynok.

Those who are interested in social problems should go to the Narodny Dom. It is one of those magnificent examples of lavish Imperial charity so common in Russia, but like many similar efforts not altogether answering to the purpose for which it was intended. It is a huge building on the Peterburgsky Ostrov,[1] near the Zoological Gardens, given by the present Tsar to the Temperance Society with the object of providing the Russian working-man with rational amusement unaccompanied by alcoholic beverages. Unfortunately the average Russian workman is seldom rational, he does not want to be amused, and he likes alcoholic beverages. The building itself is splendid, it has an immense well-lit and heated central hall, where concerts are given in winter; a theatre; large, airy dining-rooms where, on a spotless paper tablecloth, which also serves as a bill of fare, you can have all manner of good food served up by smart waiting-maids at reasonable charges. A clean, well-kept kitchen is open to all beholders, so that you can see how your food is being prepared. On the walls are notices, from which you may learn what you spend per annum in *vodka* if you drink ten kopeks a day, or twenty, or thirty; two or three years of spirits

[1] The Petersburg Island, a quarter of the town.

make up quite an alarming total. Outside is a large garden, where you dine in summer, and listen to the band. All this luxury may be enjoyed for the modest entrance fee of ten kopeks (2½d.), including concert, theatrical performance, which is usually of a spectacular and patriotic character, or variety show. The food, which is simple and wholesome, is also very moderate in price, and you can have quite a decent meal for thirty kopeks. But all this has not proved sufficiently attractive for the Russian workman. Even the cheap prices of the food are not quite cheap enough for him, especially if his family is with him. The Narodny Dom is a long way from many of the workmen's quarters and factories; the tram costs money, and to walk is an effort; and above all, the workman can hardly conceive enjoyment without *vodka*. So he prefers to go to the nearest gardens or spirit-shop, or to stop at home. The Dom is certainly not empty, but the majority of its *habitués* are not workmen at all. There are shopkeepers, *employés* of the lower ranks, soldiers and non-commissioned officers, and even a few officers, mostly with families, University students, and a crowd of miscellaneous persons of various classes. The "horny-handed sons of toil" are few and far between, and do not seem to be quite at their ease; they feel themselves almost intruders in a building primarily designed for their benefit. In time doubtless it will become more popular, and perhaps if wages go up they will be able to patronise its restaurant, while education

will teach them to appreciate *vodka*-less joys; but for the present it must rank to some extent among the wasted good intentions.

The building itself, a sort of crystal palace, was the exhibition building of the Nijni Novgorod Exhibition of 1896, which was pulled down, packed up, sent to St. Petersburg, and rebuilt.

Wishing to see something of the Russian Army, I visited Krasnoie Selo (The Red Village), a vast military camp sixteen miles from the capital. This charming and peaceful spot, the scene of one of Peter the Great's victories over the Swedes, is now used as the summer training-ground for the St. Petersburg garrison. Every summer some forty thousand troops take up their quarters at Krasnoie Selo and spend several weeks there under canvas.

I went by train on a bright July day, and the spectacle was really a very picturesque one. The handsome railway station was crowded with officers and men in their smart summer uniforms, and on the sidings were long rows of vans labelled "Eastern Chinese Railway," for a depôt was then being formed for the dispatch of troops and stores to Manchuria, although none of the St. Petersburg regiments were as yet actually going to the front.

The troops encamped were the Guards regiments, including the Emperor's bodyguard of Cossacks in their picturesque but somewhat theatrical uniforms. These various corps are the *élite* of the service, and their officers are mostly men of wealth and high social standing. Each regiment is commanded

not by a mere colonel, but by a full general; one regiment, that of the Chevalier Gardes, is commanded by the Dowager Empress, and would only go into action if that exalted lady herself were to take the field. At the cavalry school at Krasnoie Selo there are officers from all parts of the Empire, who come for special training in riding, fencing, tactics, etc. There were wild-looking Circassians in strange costumes and small-eyed Mongols from Eastern Siberia hobnobbing with smart young Guardsmen, Sheremetieffs, Yusupoffs, Dolgorukis, Galitzyns, the *fine fleur* of Russian aristocracy. The Russian Army has this good point — that race is no bar to a man's advancement (save in the case of Jews, who are not admitted as officers). A Mahometan from Turkestan has as much chance of attaining to the highest rank as any descendant of Rurik.

Let us take a stroll along the road skirting the wood, flanked by endless lines of white tents. As the camp is a permanent one, earthwork emplacements have been built up for the tents, which are also provided with wooden flooring and doors. The Russian Tommy does not try to make himself at all comfortable; in fact very few Russians ever do. He lives *au jour le jour*, revelling in untidiness, everything thrown about on the floor — clothing, linen, cooking utensils — all in a heap. His life is a hard one; his term of service is five years, which is longer than that of soldiers in any other Continental army. His food is bad, although the poverty of the peas-

ants in their homes is so great that by contrast it is ample in quantity; the treatment he receives at the hands of his officers is often brutal in the extreme. But he manages to keep up a certain sad cheerfulness, and beguiles the tedium of long, weary marches by singing those beautiful but terribly plaintive songs of the Russian people. To hear soldiers singing these weird and touching melodies makes one realise the sadness and sorrow of Russian life.

In another part of the camp we see him at play. He has nothing comparable to English games, but he is fond of gymnastics and "giant strides" — a game played by swinging round a pole on a rope attached to it. He is very handy with his fingers, as indeed all Russian peasants are. The *mujik*, shut up for months at a time in winter in his little cottage with nothing to do and only himself to depend on for most of his needs, develops great ingenuity in all sorts of ways, and learns to make baskets, furniture, saddlery, toys, household utensils, etc. This skill stands him in good stead in the army, and he can provide most of the things needed in camp without calling in outside assistance. These tall, stalwart men of war are more like great children than grown men; their ideas are utterly elemental, they are easily amused, and astonishingly ignorant. Military service, however, in spite of its many evils, certainly does shake them up, and gives them a wider outlook on life. It is said that a peasant or workman who has been in the army commands higher wages than one who has not.

An interesting feature of Russian military life is offered by the schools attached to certain regiments. They exist for the benefit of orphans and children whose parents are in poor circumstances. On the recommendation of some responsible person, the colonel admits boys to the regimental school from the age of seven or eight and to the number of thirty or forty. The pupils are maintained free of charge at the expense of the State, and given an education more or less on the lines of that of the ordinary elementary schools, but in addition they learn military drill, gymnastics, riding, etc., and they wear the uniform of the regiment, of which they are inordinately proud. It was most amusing to see one tiny little fellow, only seven years old, standing up to be photographed with the greatest delight, trying to look at least seven feet high. After their schooling the boys are taught some trade; they are permitted to perform their military service four years earlier than is usually done, and on leaving the army they are helped to obtain employment and launched into the world. These schools are not the only aspect of the general educational policy of the Russian Army, for the soldiers themselves are given a certain amount of elementary instruction, and are taught various handicrafts.

At St. Petersburg, in July, 1904, there were few signs that the country was in the throes of a great struggle. The papers continue to report the news from the front, news of battle and of the death and mangling of tens of thousands of brave men, usually

ending in the defeat of Russian arms. But the people went about their usual occupations, and apparently took very little interest in the matter. The war did not even form an important part of their private conversations, not because they are afraid of spies, for there is no fear of discussing the war as there is or rather was of discussing internal affairs, but because they do not care. The local papers at the beginning of the war were of a quite Byzantine servility, which would be comic if the circumstances were not so tragic. Nearly all the St. Petersburg papers appear only in the morning, and hardly ever publish later editions; but war telegrams, issued by the papers and the various press agencies, are sold at frequent intervals by small boys, who rush about shouting, "*Interesnaya telegramma General-Adyutanta Kuropatkina!*" or "*Balshoie Morskoie Srajinie!*" (great naval battle), or "*Dvadzat tisyatch Yapontzeff ubyty*" (twenty thousand Japanese killed), and similar exciting statements. When examined, these sheets seldom contain anything but the news already published in the morning's journals. Consequently there is no great anxiety to purchase them. The official statements are often cryptic and incomplete, but usually not actually untruthful. The telegrams of the Russian correspondents and agencies, on the other hand, are extremely wild and fantastic. Sometimes official statements are issued in the course of the day, and posted up in various prominent places. There little groups of peasants or workmen will gather and painfully spell out the news; but, however

important these may be, there is never a sign of excitement on the faces of the readers.

There was, however, one curious manifestation of war feeling at the Zoological Gardens, which was symptomatic of the way St. Petersburghers look at the events in the Far East. The Zoological Garden is one of the favourite open-air resorts of the capital, and in summer-time there is a theatre where popular performances are given. Last summer the piece chosen was entitled "The Russo-Japanese War" — an ambitious subject, one would think — and it presented a very wonderful version of the events in the Far East as suited to Russian popular taste. The first act is a betrothal scene in a Russian village. A stalwart young peasant is about to be married to the village beauty; a naval officer, the son of a local magnate, is also present with his betrothed. The parents, both of the humble and the noble couple, are on the stage, and there is much feasting and merry-making. But these gay proceedings are suddenly interrupted by the arrival of a soldier-messenger, who announces the night attack on Port Arthur and the outbreak of hostilities. The Imperial manifesto is read aloud amidst an outburst of patriotic enthusiasm. The peasant bridegroom is called out as a reservist to go to the front, while the young nobleman is ordered to join his ship at Port Arthur. Their brides decide to accompany them as Red Cross nurses. Speeches, cheers, and curtain. The next scene transports us to the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg. Troops are drawn up in the

square, and a colonel enters on horseback, treats his men to a patriotic harangue, and rides off at the head of the regiment. Then we witness a departure scene at a wayside railway station. Troops are being entrained for the front, cardboard engines wander up and down the line aimlessly, and all is busy confusion. Comic relief is supplied by a soldier, who rushes about wildly, unable to find his carriage. At last there is a whistle, the third bell clangs,[1] and the train departs for the Far East amidst more cheering and patriotic enthusiasm of the crowd. Then follow a series of views of the Trans-Siberian railway and of the Manchurian line. We are introduced to the famous Khung-khuzes, who are trying to blow up the railway. They place dynamite under it, and go away, leaving only two of their party on the watch — a father and son. The former is a wicked Russophobe, whereas the latter is enamoured of Russian civilisation. A long discussion follows as to the ethics of the conflict, which ends in a duel, in which the son kills or wounds his papa and puts up the danger signal just in time to stop a Russian troop-train, which was hurrying on to its destruction. The first skirmish between Russians and Japanese now takes place with loud reports, ending, I need hardly say, with the victory of the Russians. The event is celebrated by a series of national dances, including those of the

[1] On the Russian railways the first (one stroke) clangs about fifteen minutes before the train starts, the second (two strokes) five minutes before, the third (three strokes) just as the train moves off. At wayside stations the intervals are shorter.

Jews and the Circassians, but the absence of Finnish and Polish dances was surprising. After the Manchurian line, Port Arthur. Here the betrothed peasants, who had lost sight of each other for some time, meet again, and a comic scene between soldier and Red Cross nurse arouses the hilarity of the public. Then we are carried back a few months (the chronological order of events is not strictly followed) to the battle of Chemulpo, and we assist at the destruction of the *Varyag* and the *Koreyetz*. Shells are flying about the stage with alarming frequency, and our ears are deafened by continual explosions. Finally the captain, in order to prevent the ship from falling into the hands of the enemy, fires his revolver into the powder-magazine and blows her up and she is swallowed in the cardboard waves. This is certainly a new version of the affair, unknown to the Governments of Japan and Russia and to the ubiquitous war correspondent.

The finest scene of all is yet to come. We are at Tokio, in the Imperial Palace. The Mikado is discussing the situation with his Ministers, who tell him that it is as bad as possible. The Finance Minister suggestively explains the state of the national exchequer by turning his pockets inside out. There is not enough money even to pay for the modest evening meal of rice to which His Imperial Majesty has been reduced. But a hopeful diversion is caused by the arrival of an English and an American financier. The Mikado at once embraces and decorates them, and the whole party

join in a comic trio. Then they proceed to business. But the two financiers wish to understand the real economic situation of the country before advancing the required loan, as, indeed, is the habit of financiers. When the accounts are shown to them, they politely but firmly hint that it is not good enough. They are thereupon deprived of their decorations, and ignominiously kicked downstairs by the Mikado in person. The latter consoles himself by ordering a ballet, and a number of Geishas proceed to dance and sing to the tune of *The Geisha* (a play which was a great success in Russia, and was being performed regularly until the war put an end to its popularity). In the midst of these frivolous proceedings a cry is heard, "The Russians are coming!" Wild shrieks, confusion, and flight. The victorious Russians enter with shouts and cheers, and take possession of the palace. A Cossack dance, and the curtain falls. The performance ends with an apotheosis of Russia; the captains of the *Varyag* and the *Koreyetz* appear on a luminous pinnacle surrounded by Catharine wheels and other noisy fireworks, while below are groups of soldiers and sailors singing a triumphal chorus.

The audience, which had read accounts of new Russian defeats that very morning, was quite happy to gaze at Russian triumphs in the evening, but it took both with the same indifference, and seemed to be chiefly moved by the comic relief. It is an extraordinary indication of the popular mind that such a spectacle should be tolerated at all, whatever

way one regards the war. Is it supreme confidence in the nation's destiny, or want of imagination?

Another manifestation of Russian sentiment on the war is found in the curious coloured prints and cartoons sold all over the country, with a view to guiding the popular mind in the right direction.[1] They are highly coloured representations of events in the Far East, or symbolical scenes prophesying Russia's triumph and the iniquity of her enemies. In some we see wonderful versions of the battles of Yalu, Kinchau, Liao-Yang, etc., and of the naval engagements, in which the Russians are invariably victorious, while the Japanese are being slaughtered by thousands, and almost drowned in torrents of blood. Others are symbolical, and teach the *mujik* how Great Britain and the United States are backing up Japan, and fighting Russia in an underhand way. But the Russian, in spite of these diabolical machinations, always comes out "top dog," to the discomfiture of Jap, John Bull, and Jonathan. There are over two hundred of these cartoons, and they are on sale all over Russia. You see them adorning the walls of peasant cottages, shops, low-class restaurants, but apparently their effect is not very considerable, and they have succeeded in arousing no enthusiasm for the war; at most they may have excited a little hostility against the Anglo-Saxon.

[1] It has been stated that these cartoons were distributed by order of the authorities; but I was unable to obtain any corroborative evidence on this point. More probably they were merely produced by some enterprising printer or publisher who hoped to turn an honest penny in a manner not displeasing to the powers that be.

Otherwise life was proceeding much as usual in St. Petersburg; business was bad, and every one was poorer, but the mass of the Petersburghers continued in this almost Turkish indifference, careless of everything save the needs of the day. Even the murder of Plehve caused but a languid interest. A change, however, has come over the country, and throughout the summer and autumn the lesson of the Manchurian defeats has been penetrating deeper and deeper, and during my stay in the country I noticed that their effects were becoming daily more widely felt, until strikes, riots, and revolutions have at last awakened the country from its apathy.

CHAPTER III

MOSCOW

MOSCOW is one of those world cities which sum up the essence of a whole civilisation or of many civilisations, which have a distinct spirit and character of their own, and are still living forces in the world. There are but few cities of this kind — Rome, Constantinople, Venice, London, Paris, Jerusalem, and a few others. Other towns, however beautiful, however full of historical reminiscence, seem either lacking in that feeling of universal importance, or they have ceased to live, or there is a break in their continuity. But Moscow is Russia; it shows us every aspect of Russian life, every phase of Russian history, and it is still seething with life.

It is certainly the most curious and interesting of Russian towns. I hardly know whether to call it a typical Russian town, for although it is the centre and heart of all things Russian, it is quaint and beautiful, while the great majority of the towns in the Tsar's dominions are monotonous, sordid, and ugly, without being in the least picturesque. They have the squalor and dirt of the East with none of

its glamour or its harmonious colour. Even in Moscow a large part of the city has these same unattractive features, this same unlovely monotony. But then it has the Kremlin, which is truly a thing of beauty unlike anything else in the world, and the old Kitai Gorod, or Chinese town, which gives us a true glimpse of old Russia, the Russia of the early Tsars, of the Tartar invasion, of Ivan the Terrible — not the Russia of imitation which Peter the Great and others flattered themselves was Europe. With all its incongruities, its garish and strident colours, Moscow, and above all the Kremlin, is beautiful. Seen on a bright, sunny day from the Kamenny Bridge, the red walls, of a red that is almost Sienese, the sharp-pointed battlements, the towers with their glittering rich green tiles, the accumulated mass of pink palaces, white cathedrals, and golden domes, the verdant freshness of the hillside and the avenues, and the broad waters of the Moskva, form a wonderful picture, that may well arouse enthusiasm in the heart of the traveller. The first time I saw it was late in the afternoon on a rainy day when the sky was grey and all was shrouded in gloom. Suddenly there was a break in the clouds and a ray of the setting sun struck the Kremlin: the domes seemed all at once to be aflame, the ugly and yellowish pink of the large palace became glowing orange, the red walls and the red tower over the Troitskiya Gate became Italian and splendid; the trees and the grass studded with emeralds. I realised then of what the Kremlin was capable.

MOSCOW

On arriving at Moscow one is at first bewildered by the maze of crooked streets going up hill and down dale, the blind alleys, the passages, the curious buildings all askew, and the hopeless confusion of the streets, apparently not designed on any definite plan. To grasp its topography one must imagine Moscow as a wheel of many circles: the Kremlin is the axle, the main streets leading outwards, like the Nikitskaya, Tverskaya, Petrovskskaya, Lubianka Ilinka, and Varvarka, are the spokes; the walls of the Chinese town form the first circle, the boulevards the middle circle, and the chain of monasteries, united by further boulevards, the outer circle. The series of circles had a defensive purpose, for they formed the various lines of fortifications. The monasteries — true embodiments of the Church Militant — were the first line of defence. The old walls of the city stood on the emplacement of the boulevards. Then there was the Chinese or inner town, more strongly defended, and finally the holy of holies, the home of the Tsars, the storehouse of the most sacred relics and of the treasure — the Kremlin. If we bear this conformation in mind Moscow will begin to blossom out and expand into reasonable shape, and we need not fear to lose our way among its intricacies.

Moscow is in many ways a capital. If all the machinery of Government is centred in St. Petersburg, where the Court, the Ministers, and diplomatic corps reside, Moscow is none the less the real centre of Russian life, the holy city bound up

with all the country's traditions and history, the stronghold of Orthodoxy and of Russian and Slavophil ideals. Even geographically it is the heart of Russia, and all the main lines of railways flow to and from the old capital, which has become the chief commercial and industrial centre of the Empire. St. Petersburg and Moscow divide the honours pretty evenly, and each embodies a certain set of ideas. Moscow represents the old Muscovite views, conservative, thoroughly Russian, and old-fashioned, while St. Petersburg represents the tendency towards the West. Moscow sums up Russian history and Russian development, if not from the earliest times, at all events from the XII. century downwards. In the churches, with their Greek Byzantine forms exaggerated and made grotesque by rude and unskilled hands, we see the earliest signs of Russian civilisation, foreign in its origin and marred rather than developed by native elements. The palaces of the Kremlin in their barbaric gorgeousness are typical of Russian autocracy, while the very small number of old private palaces of the nobility show how utterly dependent on the Court the Russian *dvorianstvo* always has been. The very name *dvorianin* means courtier, for the nobles of Russia were never feudatories. They had no independent position, and could be made or destroyed by a smile or frown from the sovereign. The Tsar was everything; the nobles, in spite of their privileges, nothing.

The strong defensive character of the architecture

reminds us that Moscow was for many centuries under the shadow of the Tartar peril, and indeed more than once it was taken and sacked by Mongol hordes. The Tartars have strongly impregnated every side of Russian life, both by giving the people an Asiatic character and its Government the nature of an Oriental despotism, and by compelling it into the paths of militarism, for they were constantly challenging Russia's very right to exist. National defence was the mainspring of Russian policy for many centuries. As for the Asiatic character of the Russians, I do not mean to say that they are Asiatics by blood. Although Russia contains an immense number of different races, belonging to almost every branch of the human family, the great majority of the Tsar's subjects are pure Slavs, and therefore Aryans. But they have been in contact with and governed by Orientals for many generations, and have imbibed their traditions and habits. Russia finally shook off the Tartar's domination, and conquered them; but their impress remains; their actual descendants remain to this day, and in no town are the Tartars more conspicuous than in Moscow. You see them wandering about the town intent on their business, monopolising certain trades, sober, serious, more or less honest, modest, and unassuming, destroyed as a people, yet still the conquerors of the Russian spirit.

The Russia of Ivan the Terrible is represented in Moscow by the traditions of his awful cruelties, by the many buildings erected under his auspices, and

above all by that strange church Vassili Blajenny,[1] one of the most curious architectural freaks in the world. Its architect is unknown, its style a mixture of many, its general character thoroughly typical of Russia in the XVI. century. It is certainly not beautiful — there is no proportion, no fine lines, no harmonious plan. It is simply a medley of architectural eccentricities — domes, cupolas, pinnacles, turrets, spires, arches, with incongruity of colour, thrown together regardless of plan or design. Many of the cupolas look like pantomime fruits, or animals, monstrous melons, pineapples, onions. None of them are plain, in fact nothing about this church is simple or restful to the eye. It is not without a certain fascination which compels attention, but it is *la beauté du diable*, and reminds us of some monstrous orchid, priceless to the collector, but unlovely and repellant. It is worthy of Ivan the Terrible and his times, and is full of horrible suggestions of fiendish wickedness and nameless vice.

Russian as it is, Moscow is also typical of another phase of Russian life — the foreign element. Throughout its history Russia has been largely made by men of non-Russian blood. To Moscow numbers of English merchant adventurers flocked ever since 1553, when Richard Chancellor landed at Archangel. The early settlers were traders, or exercised handicrafts, some of which were first introduced by them into the country. Several churches

[1] Blessed Basil, from the name of a half-mad holy man who dwelt near this spot.

and other buildings were erected by Englishmen, such as that of St. Catherine, and the famous tower built by John Villiers, whose name was corrupted into Ivan Veliky, or Great John; and the fine red Gothic towers over the Troitskiya and Spasskiya gates of the Kremlin, by Galloway. Besides Englishmen, there were numbers of Italian, German, and other foreign craftsmen and artists in Moscow during the XVI. and XVII. and XVIII. centuries, for the Tsars were anxious to enlist their services as instructors in civilisation for the Russian people. Soldiers of fortune from England, Scotland, and other lands entered the Tsar's armies too, and won many of Russia's most celebrated victories. To this day the foreign element is largely represented, especially in the commercial world, where foreigners abound, some of them descendants of old settlers, others only recently arrived and ready to return home as soon as they have "made their pile."

Nor is Moscow free from the new civilisation which a succession of Tsars have tried to force on to an unwilling people. Moscow is now the most important manufacturing centre in Russia, and one of the greatest commercial emporia in Europe. Of late years banking has tended rather to make its headquarters in St. Petersburg, but in trade and manufactures Moscow takes the first place. Nearly every Russian industry is represented here — cotton spinning, weaving, and printing, silk spinning, metallurgy, breweries, sugar refineries, manufactures of chemicals, engineering works, etc., while the Moscow

merchants are the wealthiest and most important in the country. The railway system of Russia has its centre in Moscow, and the disposition of the various main lines recalls that of the streets of the town, for they shoot out like the spokes of a wheel. Here one enjoys a good general outlook over the conditions of Russian trade, for all the businesses of the country have their centre, or at least have important agencies, in Moscow. But Moscow trade is old-fashioned in its methods, in its system of long credits, in its way of still dealing largely in the goods in bulk rather than by samples, in the general happy-go-lucky rule of thumb by which business is transacted, even in the old Russian costume which many of the merchants still wear. Some of the places where wholesale business is carried on, such as the Stary Gostinny Dvor, or Old Court of the Strangers,[1] are almost as quaint as the bazaars of Stambul. There are curious courtyards surrounded by warehouses and shops two or three stories high, with vaulted *loggie* on the ground floor and broad wooden galleries or verandas along the upper stories. In the courtyards themselves carts are being piled up with mountains of curiously shaped boxes containing every variety of merchandise. Some of these passages are covered in with glass, and there are bridges across them and across the smaller courtyards. Side by side we see many strange contrasts in Moscow. There are monster hotels, blocks of flats

[1] The name is a survival of the days when merchants were nearly all foreigners.

decorated in the most decadent *Art Nouveau* style, palatial railway stations, electric light and tramways, smart restaurants, fine theatres, large modern shops where you can buy all the latest novelties from Europe — if you choose to pay two or three times their value. But, on the other hand, the streets are vilely paved with heart-breaking cobbles, there are filthy slums nestling in the most fashionable quarters, curious bazaars that would hardly be out of place in Macedonia, peasants of the most primitive type, driving in carts made entirely of wood without a piece of iron in their composition. The famous Red Square presents many curious incongruities — a vast space flanked on one side by the red walls of the Kremlin, with the Nikolskiya and the Spasskiya gates, typical of the Moscow of the Tsars and the Tartar wars and the churches; on the other the imposing mass of the *Ryady*, or new commercial quarter, where many of the finest shops and important business houses are situated; at one end the monstrous Vassili Blajenny, at the other the historic museum. In the middle are the monuments of Minin and Pojarsky, the heroes of the Russian national uprising against the Poles, and a little further on the Lobnoie Miesto, or place of execution, where Ivan the Terrible and many successors committed their orgies of blood — the most glorious and the most shameful remembrances of Russian history side by side.

The historical museum as such is not a very important collection. But it is interesting as repre-

senting the peculiar nature of Russian national development. The object of the founders of the museum was that it should grow into something like the Germanic National Museum at Nuremberg, where the progress of German civilisation can be traced step by step. But in Russia such an attempt could not prove successful, for the country has had no really continuous development. Thus we find several rooms full of early Russian objects — utterly barbarous and primitive, relics of the Stone Age and of various subsequent periods when the Russian people were still in the most elementary stages of civilisation, here and there a few *ikons*, imitated from Greek models, and some early metal work, an industry which can claim to be both characteristically Russian and artistic. Then suddenly we come upon imitations of foreign models, German, French, or English, typical of the new Russia of Peter the Great and Catherine II. There is no progressive development — merely barbarism followed by a foreign civilisation.

Moscow is an extremely odd city in many ways, and is full of strange customs and survivals. There are numbers of bazaars for the sale of special goods, but indeed the town itself has not lost its character of one huge bazaar. Many streets and squares are filled with stalls and pedlars of all kinds. Fruit-stalls are the commonest, especially in the autumn, when the large consignments of fresh fruit from the Caucasus and the Crimea begin to arrive; the Moisiskaia Ploshtchad, with its many stalls covered

with white awnings, distantly recalls the Piazza delle Erbe at Verona. A characteristic Moscow type is the fruit-boy, kneeling on one knee with his basket of fruit on the other; he sometimes remains for hours at a time in this posture. Other stalls cater for the thirsty, and in summer do a roaring trade in "fruit-waters." Among the special bazaars is the Sunday market at the Sukharova tower, where one may occasionally pick up genuine "finds" in the shape of old *ikons* or Russian enamel work; but as a rule one is assailed with offers of blue glass vases, hammers, second-hand boots, stolen watches, and door-handles. Another bazaar is devoted to the sale of birds and dogs, another to *samovars* (tea urns).

One of the least pleasant features of Moscow life is the noise. The cobble-stones reverberate to the wheels and horses' hoofs, producing a most maddening din. It is impossible to hear yourself speak in the streets unless you shriek at the top of your voice. The traffic is most incompetently regulated, and in spite of the huge force of police, there is no attempt at keeping even a semblance of order. In wet weather every street is a river of mud and slush, and if a rubber-tyred cab passes close by you are liable to be splashed from top to bottom. In winter, of course, all this is changed, there is no noise, no mud, no cobbles; all is covered with a thick carpet of snow, wheeled traffic ceases and is replaced by silent sleighs. The streets are full of movement, especially certain commercial thoroughfares like the Kuznetsky

Most, the Pterovka, or the Varvarka, and one sees the most varied collection of human types — Jews, Tartars, Greeks, Armenians, Great Russians, Little Russians, White Russians, Poles, Finns, Circassians, Siberians, Georgians, Rumanians, Turks, Chinamen, Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen, and goodness knows how many other races and nationalities.

Another dominant note of Moscow life is religion. The religion of the Russians is really a revelation of mediæval devotion, and in the great ceremonies, the processions, the pilgrimages, and the ritual, we see a picture of what faith was in Western Europe at the time of Peter the Hermit. After Kiev, Moscow is the most holy city in Russia, and is said to contain over a thousand churches, besides shrines and chapels innumerable. The holy and miracle-working images are very numerous, and they are regarded with the deepest veneration by the people. The most famous of all is the celebrated Iberian Virgin (*Iverskaia Bozhemat*), kept in a small chapel in the Voskressenskaya Ploshtchad, between the two arches of the gate of the same name leading to the Red Square. It is a copy, executed in 1648, of a much older image preserved in Mount Atlas. No good Orthodox Christian ever passes it without doffing his hat and crossing himself many times, and every day large numbers of people enter the chapel to pray before the holy picture. Whenever the Tsar comes to Moscow, before entering the Kremlin he visits this shrine and prays before it. One may see the most important people in the land doing homage here and

kissing the *ikon* — generals in full uniform, councillors of State, nobles and noblewomen of the highest rank, rich merchants, not to mention masses of humbler folk. Many miracles are attributed to the Iberian Madonna, among others the conversion of an infidel, who on scratching the picture saw blood flow from the wound; the scratch is visible to this day, to bear witness to the truth of the story. The Virgin is adorned with a crown of brilliants and quantities of pearls and precious stones, including some of great size, and a network of pearls, and the robe covered with the usual silver plaques. Every day the image is taken from the chapel, placed in a large closed coach, drawn by six black horses, four abreast and two in front, one of the latter ridden by a boy postillion. Inside, opposite the image, sit two priests in full vestments. Priests, driver, footmen, and postillion are always bareheaded, whatever the weather. It is then carried to the houses of people who are dangerously ill (provided they can pay the fee of 50 to 200 roubles), or to assist at family festivals, the inauguration of new buildings or shops, and other similar functions. In the case of a new building a temporary shrine is erected in the courtyard, before which the priests hold a service. The belief in the image is so great that when a certain night restaurant of somewhat doubtful respectability celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its existence, the proprietor sent for the holy *ikon* to sanctify the proceedings. Whether any elevation of the tone of the establishment in question was

noticeable afterwards we are not told. During its absence from home the image is replaced by a copy, to which great virtues are also attributed. When the coach drives past, people prostrate themselves before it, touching the ground with their foreheads in abject humility. One day as the vehicle was rolling along and several passers-by were bowing low, I saw one of the priests put his head out of the window and spit into the street. The action was characteristic, and the fact that it was not resented shows what a wide gap there is in the eyes of the Orthodox between the Church he venerates and its ministers whom he despises. The image is a large source of income to the Church, not only from the fees which are paid when it is sent for, but also from the offerings which most of the worshippers leave when praying at the shrine itself.

An interesting feature of Moscow is the vehicles, of which there are many varieties. Ordinary carriages of the European type, such as victorias, landaus, broughams, etc., are comparatively rare, but there are many special Russian types. The ordinary cabs are called *izvoshtchiks*,[1] and of these there are some tens of thousands; they are low, crazy, four-wheeled vehicles, drawn by one horse, with seats for two and a small box for the driver, who wears a long caftan and flat Russian cap. There is no tariff in Moscow and the method of hiring a cab is characteristic of the happy-go-lucky Russian method of conducting business. The intending "fare" walks up to the

[1] *Izvoshtchik* really means driven, but the word is equally applied to the cab.

first of a long row of Jehus on the stand, in a careless sort of way, so as to eschew the least suggestion of hurry, mentions his destination, and suggests a price — say thirty kopeks. Jehu No. 1 is aghast at the smallness of the sum, and asks sixty kopeks. You do not listen to his protestations, but pass on to No. 2, repeating the same offer. No. 2 will also probably refuse, but offer to convey you for fifty. No. 3 will ask forty, but you are as adamant; then several, possibly including the first two or three, will begin bidding against each other for your custom, until your terms are reached. The first who agrees to thirty kopeks is your man. Acceptance is signified by the word *pajaluista* (please), and a gesture inviting you to take a seat. If only one cab is available and your terms are refused, you walk away, and it is ten to one that you will be followed and offered lower and lower terms until your price is reached. Another peculiarity of the Moscow cabby is that he often does not know how to drive. He is a believer in frontal attacks, and forges ahead in the direction of his destination, regardless of curb-stones and other obstacles. Many do not even know their way, as they come up from the country for a few months, never having been in Moscow before. The next grade above the *izvoshtchik* is the *likhatch*, which is superior and smarter in every way; it has rubber tyres, a better and faster horse, and a driver padded out to an enormous size. Private carriages are like *likhatchi*, but still smarter, and their drivers still more padded out; many have two or three horses abreast.

As for popular feeling, Moscow has always been regarded as the centre of Orthodoxy, Slavophilism, and Panslavism. The *Moskovskiya Viedomosti*, or *Moscow Gazette*, formerly edited by the famous Katkoff, was, and is still, the chief exponent of reactionary ideas, and at one time wielded quite a power in Russia. Moscow represented the focus of all those who believed that Russia must work out her salvation on her own lines, rejecting European innovations and Western ideas, whereas St. Petersburg represented the Russia of Peter the Great and Catherine II. and Alexander II., the Russia that aspired to be European. Moscow was under the influence of clericalism and reaction, while St. Petersburg was the home of the progressive and somewhat sceptical aristocracy. But of late years the *rôles* of the two cities have rather changed. St. Petersburg, being the political capital, has come to reflect the ideas of the governing circles more and more, and to change from Conservative to Liberal and *vice versâ*, according as the influences at Court tend in the one direction or the other. During the last two reigns, when the Government has been thoroughly reactionary, St. Petersburg has also taken the same view of public affairs. In Moscow, on the other hand, the commercial and industrial world has come to be more and more influential, and its tendencies are towards Liberalism. The old Moscow nobility is still very conservative and bigoted in the main, although many of its members are men of great enlightenment and intelligence.

But the merchant class, represented by men of the Morozoff type, are now of a very different way of thinking, and the large number of factory hands has introduced a further element of unrest. If the *Moskovskiya Viedomosti* is still the organ of reaction *par excellence*, it has now become the laughing-stock of Russia, and no longer carries any weight; whereas the *Russkiya Viedomosti*, also published in Moscow, is the most liberal, honest, and respectable paper in the country, and in the solidity and good sense of its articles, the moderation of its tone, and above all by the courage with which it advocated liberal ideas in the dark days of reaction, when suspension by the censor hung like a sword of Damocles over its head, it has deserved well of all Russian Liberals.

The Moscow University is also to some extent a centre of Liberalism, and professors and students are all more or less "tainted." The former, indeed, are among the chief contributors to the *Russkiya Viedomosti*, the somewhat professorial tone of which is perhaps its chief defect as a newspaper, while the latter are frequently in trouble with the authorities for their political views. As a teaching body it cannot stand as high as the more celebrated universities of Western Europe, because it is frequently closed for months at a time on account of political disturbances, and because the censorship hampers the students in their studies. In the university, as in the factory, we find the same trouble — a superabundance of holidays — in fact, in the university there are far more than in the factory, because they

are increased by the student riots. Russia, above all other countries, is cursed with an intellectual proletariate, for there are many thousands of students so poor that they can barely afford their college fees, and in bad weather cannot attend the courses as they have not sufficient clothes. Benevolent societies are formed to provide them with necessaries, and there is a large number of scholarships, each just sufficient to maintain a student in penury during his studies. These students and graduates overflow the offices and liberal professions, and become the most active agents of revolutionary propaganda. One finds, indeed, glaring contrasts among the Russian educated classes, between advanced and daring ideas and complete ignorance of matters which are common knowledge to the rest of Europe. Side by side with the most revolutionary doctrines that would shock the most advanced of English or French Radicals there are students, like one whom I met last autumn, who simply refuse to believe that such a thing as religious freedom exists in any country in the world. These incongruities are but the result of the system of repression of ideas which, while it succeeds admirably in destroying all independent thought among the stupid masses, drives others to the wildest extremes of revolutionary ideas in politics, literature, and philosophy. All this is hostile to really sound study and leads men away from serious work into the paths of general and somewhat ill-balanced speculation. At present the university question is one of

great concern, for owing to the part taken by the students in the recent disturbances higher education is almost at a standstill. Most of the universities and colleges are closed, and students, schoolboys, and even schoolgirls have in many cases been treated to generous doses of police brutality, which has provoked the resentment of all classes of the population.

The economic effects of the war, aggravated by the strikes and the general disturbed state of the country, have been very seriously felt in Moscow, and the general situation is anything but satisfactory. Moscow was certainly not enthusiastically bellicose. The reactionary parties and their papers continued to connect religion and warlike patriotism from day to day, and tried to persuade themselves and the people that this war was like the war of 1877, but without much success. The commercial classes who suffered from the disturbance of trade were bitterly opposed to it. The merchants and manufacturers at the beginning showed great generosity in giving money in aid of the sick and wounded, and huge sums were collected for the purpose. But the shameful scandals in the administration of the Red Cross funds, which have lately come to light, so disgusted everybody that there has been a considerable falling off in the subscriptions. As an instance of the way the Red Cross is managed, the following anecdote is characteristic. An ex-police master of Kronstadt, who had been dismissed from his post a few years ago for peculation,

received an appointment, on the outbreak of the war, on the Red Cross, and was entrusted with a sum of 600,000 roubles, to be expended for certain purposes in Manchuria. He went out to the Far East, and in a short time all the money had disappeared, no one knew how. Complaints were made at headquarters, and after much correspondence the ex-police master was recalled — and given another Red Cross appointment at St. Petersburg![1] The Moscow merchants were quite ready to give more money for the purpose, but they organised hospital equipments of their own, so as to be certain that the funds were not misappropriated, for they no longer trusted the Red Cross. Not only the Moscow merchants, but other private persons as well, have fitted out hospitals of their own rather than entrust their money to the Red Cross. Russians are not so very particular about the dishonesty of Government officials, and even in other countries in war-time there is bound to be a great deal of dishonesty in connection with military stores, but these swindles on the Red Cross went rather beyond what even the Russian public was accustomed to, and have aroused widespread indignation. There may be a certain amount of exaggeration in what one hears on this subject, but there is no doubt whatever that the dishonesty has been astounding. There are few things in which Russians excel more than in their generosity towards

[1] The above anecdote was told to me by a Russian gentleman who had organised one of the military hospitals.

charity, and the shameful scandals of the Red Cross have contributed not a little to make the Government unpopular. It is felt that by "bureaucratising" charity it has become subject to all the peculation and waste of a Government department.

In Moscow, moreover, there are not even the material advantages to be derived from the war which to some extent exist at St. Petersburg. The proportion of the manufacturers who are interested in the supply of war material is very small, while the others are all feeling the ill-consequences of the struggle. Nor are there so many financiers interested in Manchurian concessions, and the Moscow merchants are not very keen on the success of the Far Eastern speculations of St. Petersburg company promoters, with whom certain highly placed personages are popularly believed to be connected. In private conversation one hears no good said of the war and of the policy which led to it, and the generals, admirals, and ministers are, with few exceptions, common subjects of vituperation and ridicule.

CHAPTER IV

NIJNI NOVGOROD

EVERY Russian will tell you that you have not seen Russia if you have not been to the great fair of Nijni Novgorod, the *Nijegorodskaya Yarmarka*, as it is called,[1] and it is certainly one of the most curious spectacles in Europe. But it is well not to expect too much. It has not the picturesqueness and brilliant costumes of a Turkish bazaar, nor the colour of Italy, nor historic associations of hoary antiquity. It is above all things thoroughly Russian. Many people, including Russians themselves, are fond of saying that Russia is an Asiatic country; other Russians would like to say that it is European. As a matter of fact, it is both; in Russia, Europe and Asia meet and blend. At Nijni Novgorod this infusion can be seen in its most characteristic forms.

In England and in the rest of Western Europe fairs have practically lost their importance. One connects them now with merry-go-rounds, cocoa-nut shies, cheap toys, and quack dentists. But two and three and four centuries ago the great fairs were events of the highest commercial importance; they

[1] A corruption of the German word *Jahrmarkt*.

were gatherings where tens and hundreds of thousands of people from all parts of the country and from foreign lands came to buy and sell. In the towns the permanent shops were few and the stock of goods small, and business on a large scale had to be transacted at the fairs, where dealers and farmers bought their supplies for many months or a year. Merchants would wander about from fair to fair until they had disposed of their stocks. To-day railways, machinery, and industrial development have radically altered the conditions of trade, and the fairs have sunk into insignificance.

But Russia is a land still far behind others in civilisation, where old methods of trade still continue to flourish, and fairs play a very important part in the common life of the country. Modern conditions are but slowly making their way into Russia, and they are at best external conditions, the real character of the people remaining unchanged. All over the country there are great annual fairs — at Nijni Novgorod, at Kiev, at Kharkoff, at Irbit in Siberia, and in a host of minor markets. But while the others are all declining rapidly, and are but shadows of their former selves, that of Nijni, although not as important as it was once, still holds its own. The creation of this fair of St. Peter and St. Paul is due to the jealousy which the princes of Moscow felt at the great trade of the Tartar Khans of Khazan; the Khans held their annual fair at Arsk on the Volga. Ivan III. (1465–1505) set up a rival fair at Vassilsursk, also on the Volga. After

the fall of the khanate of Kazan the fair was transferred to the convent of Makariev, on the same river, where it continued for a long time. But in 1816 the warehouses were burnt down, and it was then transferred to Nijni Novgorod, where it has been held ever since. At one time its importance was enormous, and most of the business of this part of Russia was transacted there, as well as a large part of that of the rest of the Empire, of Central Asia, Persia, Turkey, and the Far East. In Russia, as in Mediæval Europe, owing to the small buying power of the people and the scarcity of towns, there were few permanent stores. Most of the merchants who catered for the needs of the peasantry were wandering pedlars. The great fairs succeeded each other so that the goods unsold at one could be disposed of at the next. Thus the Nijni fair was held in the summer, that of Kharkoff in the autumn, and those of Kiev and Irbit in winter. Some of these gatherings were not held near great towns; Irbit is a village of five thousand inhabitants, and at Vassilsursk there was a little more than a monastery. Communications in Russia were difficult, and trade tended to concentrate in certain spots and at certain seasons of the year. Moreover the custom prevailed, as it still does to some extent to this day, of dealing, not by means of samples, but by goods in the bulk. A merchant does not care to order a large supply of cloth or cotton prints on a specimen; he prefers to see all the goods he is buying spread out before him. This is partly due to the want

of confidence which Russian traders have in each other, and partly to traditions of a more primitive age.

Gradually, however, communications are improving, railways are being built, and modern conditions and methods are being introduced into Russia; hence the decline of the great fairs. If that of Nijni still maintains itself it is partly on account of its favourable position and partly because the conquest of Asiatic provinces, whose inhabitants are still more uncivilised and Oriental than the Russians, has given it a new lease of life.

Nijni Novgorod is situated in the middle of Russia, at the junction of the Volga and the Oka, and at a point where the forest region of the North and the agricultural black-mould zone of the South meet. It is also in close proximity to the industries of Central Russia, to the cotton mills of Moscow, Ivanovo, Vladimir, and Tver, while the Ural iron works are comparatively not far distant. The great rivers Volga, Oka, and Kama serve as ways of communication from a large part of European Russia, from the Caspian lands, and, to some extent, from Siberia. For the whole of Siberia and Central Asia, Nijni is the nearest European centre of distribution to which to send their products. Here Siberian furs and Chinese silks and tea would be exchanged for cotton prints, calicoes, and iron goods from Russian or Western European furnaces.

But during the course of the XIX. century the character of Nijni's trade has changed. Exchange

with distant countries has decreased. China, Japan (even before the war), and the rest of Asia no longer send goods to Nijni. The so-called Russian tea, which is supposed to come overland from China, now comes chiefly by sea to Odessa. Moscow is absorbing the general trade of Russia more and more, owing to its being the centre of a network of railways communicating with all parts of the Empire and with the rest of Europe, including the Siberian railway, which has completely ousted the caravan route from the East, the river traffic alone maintaining itself for part of the year.

But the internal trade still remains important at Nijni. Provincial storekeepers and peasants still come to the *Yarmarka* to buy their supplies for the year, and manufacturers find it a convenient mode of distributing industrial products all over Russia. A considerable amount of Siberian business is done at Nijni, and traders from Khiva, Bokhara, Samarkand, and other parts of Russian Central Asia are in the habit of visiting it with their goods. The only foreign country which is largely represented is Persia, for numbers of Persians come across the Caspian and up the Volga to the fair. A small number of Turks, Afghans, British Indians, and an occasional Chinaman may be seen. But, as I said before, the fair is mainly an All-Russian gathering.

Nijni Novgorod, or "Lower New-Town," is really two towns, or rather three. It is divided into two parts by the River Oka at the point of its junction with the Volga. On the right bank of the Oka is

Nijni Novgorod proper, itself divided into the Nijni Bazaar, or lower town, and Vierchny Bazaar, or upper town, on a high, precipitous ridge. On the left bank is the fair, covering a wide extent of plain. The two are connected by two bridges, and an electric tramway runs between Nijni Bazaar and the station, which is on the outskirts of the fair. The town of Nijni Novgorod is in an extremely picturesque situation on a wooded hill, crowned with massive stone-walls, round towers, and large churches adorned with glittering gilt domes. Its whole aspect, as seen from the fair or the river, is very pleasing and attractive, and reminds one distantly of some quaint old town of the Rhineland. But the Volga is a far greater river than the Rhine, and at this point especially it is really a splendid mass of water. Unlike the enormous majority of Russian towns, Nijni has a distinct character of its own and a real history. Apart from the fair, it is historically one of the most interesting spots in the country. It is in the North only that one realises that Russia was not born yesterday, and here at Nijni we have some idea of the Russia of the XIV. century. The town was founded in 1212 by Prince Yury Vsevolodovich of Vladimir, one of the independent lords of Muscovy, as a bulwark against the invasions of the Volgars and other Mongol tribes, for then the Volga was the extreme limit of Europe. It became independent in 1350, and the residence of a prince. It was captured and burnt by the Tartars in 1377, and was incorporated in the principality of Moscow

in 1392. Early in the XVII. century, when Russia was under the yoke of Poland, Nijni became a rallying-point for the war of independence. A local butcher named Kosma Minin raised the townsfolk, and, assisted by volunteers from the banks of the Volga and other parts of the country, formed an army of deliverance, which he placed under the command of Prince Pojarsky. In 1612 this Volga army defeated the Poles before Moscow, and Russia became a nation once more. At Moscow, in the Red Square before the Kremlin, is the double monument of the two national heroes — Minin is placing a sword in the hand of Pojarsky.

Of the old town there are considerable remains. The streets are of the usual Russian type — dirty, ill-paved, and worse kept, flanked by two-storied houses; but there is the Kremlin, surrounded by a wall sixty to ninety feet high, with eleven of its thirteen towers still intact. Like the Kremlin at Moscow it is a broad enclosure and contains not only a fortress, but the Cathedral of the Transfiguration and several other churches and public buildings. There is a mass of religious relics and patriotic monuments, including the tomb of Minin and an altar to the Virgin of Kazan, in memory of the liberation of Russia from the Poles. But to examine these buildings too closely is to court disappointment — it generally is in Russia — for it is only the mass of white wall and gilt dome that is imposing.

The sights of Nijni are soon exhausted, and the

fair is the real centre of interest. We walk across a dreary square, desolate and grass-grown, flanked on one side by the huge building of the Cadet School, and enter a funicular railway. This takes us to the main street of the lower town, where an electric car is waiting. We take our seat in this modern means of communication, and are whisked down the main street and across the bridge into the thick of the fair. But it is well to get out at the bridge and watch the stream of people passing up and down. It is only on the bridge of Galata at Constantinople that I have seen a more miscellaneous crowd of strange peoples than on this bridge of Nijni. There is a ceaseless procession of those carts which are so characteristic a feature of Russian life. There are also many cabs and carriages, drawn by large-limbed, fairly swift steeds, harnessed with a *duga*, or yoke. But they are of varied degrees of smartness, from the elegant rubber-tyred *likhatch* of the local official or rich merchant to the broken-down *izvoshtchik* that plies for hire. The people one meets here and in the fair are of many nations and races. The prevailing type is the Russian — the Russian provincial dealer in long, black caftan, flat cap, and high boots, with long hair and beard, a good-natured smile, and an infinite capacity for *vodka*, who has come to restock his store; the Russian *mujik*, also long-haired and bearded, in a red cotton shirt, worn outside his trousers, and long boots, who comes to buy such simple implements as he may need for his farm. Then come the Tartars,

similar to those one sees in St. Petersburg or Moscow, with their small fezzes, black or dark blue, sometimes embroidered, or Astrakhan fur caps; they are mostly from the banks of the Volga, where there is still a numerous Tartar population. There are Persians, swarthy and villainous-looking, with black hair and thick moustache, dressed in dark clothes — caftan, baggy trousers, and tall black fez, dignified, but not brilliant; they are mostly Russian subjects from Astrakhan, Baku, and various parts of the Caucasus, but some are from Persia itself. There are Armenians, also from the Caucasus, cunning traffickers and great travellers in many lands, often possessed of great wealth, in type a cross between Persians and Jews. The Jews themselves are very numerous, and of many different kinds, from the dirty Polish Jew, with greasy curls, dressed in long coats, thin and threadbare, ill-fitting trousers and broken boots, to the smart, flashy, rich Jew attired in the latest fashion of the day, only more so, his fingers plentifully adorned with jewelled rings. Half-way between the two is the quiet, unassuming Jew from Western lands, where fair treatment has made him a man like other men. Scattered about are men of stranger type from the Caucasus and Central Asia — Bokhariots in red caftans and gorgeous turbans, Circassians in black robes all a-glitter with cartridge-belts, metal buttons, and silver-mounted knives. There are Greeks, Turks, Bulgarians, and many others. Here and there one sees a yet more unusual type — a pig-

tailed Chinaman, possibly a *Khung-Khuz* in disguise, seeking for a bridge or a railway which he may destroy, more probably a simple-hearted trader with no thought but of spoiling the Egyptian. Whatever his intentions, he is the observed of all observers, for the Russian cannot quite realise the difference between the Jap and the Heathen Chinee. Even the Hindu subject of the British Raj is there, although not very conspicuous. From the other side one may meet an occasional "European" from the West, and every now and then one hears a few words of German, French, and even English or American. The prevailing type, however, is the Russian type, the predominant language the Russian language. This is apt to cause some disappointment to those who expected to be plunged into a thoroughly Oriental world, all ablaze with the gorgeous colour of Constantinople, Cairo, or Samarkand. But if we study the fair closely we shall find much to interest us, much to recall past ways of carrying on trade, past conditions of existence.

The zenith of the Nijni fair was in the early eighties, when its business amounted to an annual average of 215,500,000 r. Since then it has been declining, and the amount of goods brought to Nijni now is valued at 160,000,000 r. to 200,000,000 r., the business transacted at about 150,000,000 r. to 185,000,000 r. per annum, while the number of persons visiting it each year is close on 400,000. The largest amount of business is in textiles, which are the chief product of Russian industry, especially

in this part of the country. Only a very small amount of these goods are imported from Central Asia as was formerly the case, for the improved Russian fabrics have cut out the rougher Asiatic kinds. "The metal spindle has beaten the practised hand of the Asiatic spinner even in her own home."[1] Raw cotton from Central Asia is, however, becoming every year more important as the plantations in the Russian colonies are developing, and the opening of the new Tashkent-Orenburg line will probably increase this business. Russian textiles are poured into Asiatic Russia, but only a very small quantity enter China, where they cannot withstand foreign competition. Persia, too, takes a large quantity of Russian goods of all kinds.[2] After textiles the next most important trade is iron and steel, from the Urals, South Russia, and, to some extent, from Europe. Of late years *articles de luxe* have come to play a large part in the fair, and the wealthy provincial merchant or landowner comes to buy gramophones, kodaks, clocks with elaborate arrangements, and other expensive toys with which to *épater* his less fortunate and more stay-at-home neighbours. Grain and food-stuffs are not dealt with in large quantities, but there is a brisk trade in dried fruit from Persia and wines from the Caucasus and the Crimea; the Moscow and St. Petersburg wine merchants and manufactureres purchase

[1] Von Schultze-Gävernitz, *Volkswirtschaftliche Studien aus Russland*, p. 68.

[2] Russian trade with Persia amounts to nearly £4,000,000 per annum, the exports being about one-fifth larger than the imports.

large supplies of these vintages, which with a little ingenuity can be converted into clarets and burgundies at three and four roubles a bottle.

The principal items of business transacted at the fair are: Cotton goods, 60,000,000 to 70,000,000 r.; iron goods, 25,000,000; tea, 20,000,000; furs, 15,000,000; hides, 7,000,000; spices, 3,000,000; wine, 2,000,000.

But although there is much that is modern in the fair, and the *dernier cri* of Paris production is to be found, the methods are still Eastern. There is a *bourse* where prices are quoted, and many travellers now deal in samples; but the chief business is still done in the bulk, and nothing is bought without a lot of preliminary bargaining. The Asiatic, and even the Russian, has an idea that he has been cheated unless the price has been agreed upon only after hours of discussion. Payments, too, are made on long credits, usually by bills on the next year's fair.

Along the quays, especially those where the steamers with Siberian and Eastern goods are moored, one sees mountains of merchandise covering vast spaces. Since the Fiscal Question has been rampant in this country we know all about exports and imports (or at least we ought to), but our knowledge is based on mere figures and diagrams, such as are set forth in the columns of the more serious daily newspapers. But at Nijni we see blue-books in concrete form. We can inspect and touch half a million's worth of iron rails and pig-

iron if so minded, and toy with a nation's supply of dried fruit for a whole year. It is certainly not a case of "invisible" exports or imports.

The fair consists of a large number of buildings of all sizes, partly of brick and stone and partly of timber, forming a series of straight streets crossing each other at right angles, on the lines of an American city. The buildings of the outer fair are somewhat less regular, and there most of the wholesale business is carried on. The warehouses and shops are usually two stories high, and in many parts the upper floor is overhanging, so as to form a covered footway. The largest of the buildings is an elaborately designed structure of red and yellow bricks called the Glavny Dom (chief mansion). Here are located the offices of the Governor of Nijni Novgorod while the fair lasts, the local branch of the Imperial Bank, which plays an important *rôle* in the business transactions by discounting bills, the post-office, the police-station, and other public offices. The ground-floor is occupied by a number of the smarter shops opening into a glass-covered court, where the band plays in the afternoon during the promenade. The morning promenade is along the Boulevard opposite the Glavny Dom.

Among the crowds there is a very large sprinkling of the inevitable and ubiquitous police, both mounted and on foot. During the fair Nijni Novgorod is placed in state of siege, and the Governor and police enjoy an authority even more absolute than is usually the case in Russia, which is saying

a good deal. The present Governor, Baron Unterberger, seems to be a capable and moderate man, and manages to maintain order among this vast concourse of people from the uttermost ends of the Empire, including not a few doubtful characters, without exercising undue severity. At one time many of the outlying parts of the fair were very unsafe after dark, and one was apt to have unpleasant encounters with disreputable Orientals armed with long knives. But that is almost a thing of the past, and both robbery and murder are now extremely rare.

A greater danger is that of fire, but this is to a large extent obviated by the rigidly enforced prohibition against smoking. Those who disregard it are liable to arrest and fines up to five hundred roubles (over £25). As, however, the Russian is essentially a smoking animal, his needs are provided for by means of little wooden huts placed at intervals along the roads, in which smoking is allowed. There one may see the Russian or Oriental trader who, unable to restrain himself any longer, suspends his sales and purchases for a few minutes and retires into one of these havens of refuge to indulge in the soothing weed.

Let us wander among the shops and warehouses. Here one may purchase anything from a packet of tea to a gramophone, from a piece of soap to a ton of steel. The different classes of goods are distributed in different quarters, so that, save for the miscellaneous shops in the Glavny Dom, everything is

arranged in a sort of geographical distribution. One of the most interesting sights is the so-called Siberian quay (Sibirskaya Pristan), which is the centre of the wholesale trade. Here are moored the large steamers and barges which have come up the Volga from Astrakhan or down the Kama, which joins the Volga near Kazan, tapping many towns which are in railway communication with Siberia. Thus the goods have to be shipped and unshipped many times before reaching Nijni. By the quays are rows of huge warehouses, in which quantities of bales of merchandise are stored. They are by no means all Siberian goods, and the products of Persia, Russian Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the whole Volga basin are brought here, while the railway carries goods from the West as well. Skins and furs from Siberia form an important and valuable item, and are bought up chiefly by German merchants to be tanned at Leipzig; there are mountains of cotton in bales from Turkestan; all day long more cargoes are being unloaded from the constantly arriving steamers or from railway wagons which come down to the quays. Nearly everything is borne on men's shoulders or rolled along the ground, for steam cranes are not in much use. The goods are either packed in canvas and matting or in wooden boxes. The latter is usual in the case of the more expensive and delicate articles, such as the *ikons* or religious pictures, of which hundreds of thousands are produced every year. These *ikons* are designed according to rigid pre-established models, for the

Eastern Church allows no deviations from what it once has fixed, but there is room for considerable variety in the elaboration of the ornaments. The colours are of great brilliancy, and the peasant families, who from time immemorial have painted them, jealously preserve the secret of their composition.

From the Siberian port we go on to the tea stores, which also offer a curious spectacle. Russia is one of the greatest tea-consuming countries of the world, for tea is the staple drink of the people. The tea is in huge piles covered with tarpaulin, behind which the sellers live in little huts. It is classified according to the different forms in which it comes; there is the "Leather" tea, which is sent overland *viâ* Kiakhta in boxes sewn up in hides with the hair on the inside; tea which comes by sea *viâ* Odessa is called "Cane" tea. The commonest kind is the "Brick" tea, which arrives in the form of hard bricks.

Another quarter of the fair is devoted to Persian goods, and one passes rows upon rows of shops where rice, dried and fresh fruit, nuts, hides, cottons, spices, stuffs, and beautiful carpets are sold by the dark, sinister-looking gentlemen in tall fezzes. In one street there is nothing but leather goods, from the cheapest and simplest pair of slippers to the most elaborate stamped leather cushions. In another there is a large collection of felt foot-gear, which is much worn by Russians, especially in winter, when they are the best protection against cold.

A little further on we find a series of shops devoted to soap of an inferior quality, chiefly manufactured at Kazan.

Near the Cathedral is a street of shops where there is nothing but painted boxes for the transport of valuable goods. These are sometimes simply painted green with a plain design in white; others are covered with tin plating of the most brilliant hues, and a variety of metal bosses. When the goods which they contain have been disposed of, the boxes themselves are also sold, sometimes for quite large sums. Their manufacture is almost a monopoly of certain districts of Russia, and they are found throughout the East from Bosnia to Manchuria. In another quarter we come upon a large selection of bells exposed for sale, so as to provide for the needs of the churches. Again we may wander among the booths devoted to popular amusements, and here we see the usual merry-go-rounds, switch-backs, flying boats, short giants, tall dwarfs, and other monstrosities. There is also a theatre, where performances are given by second-rate artistes, and quite a number of music-halls. The immense crowds of visitors to the fair are chiefly lodged in the many inns which are opened especially for this purpose close to the fair. They are called *Nomera* (literally numbers), which is the Russian word for unpretentious hotels. Those at Nijni are as a rule dirty, noisy, uncomfortable, disreputable, and expensive out of all proportion to the accommodation offered. Some of them, especially

those where the Tartars, Armenians, and other Orientals lodge, are the filthiest dens imaginable, swarming with vermin of every description. At night there is dancing and music until two or three A.M. The best inns are in the upper town, although even those leave much to be desired and are very exorbitant.

This year Nijni too was under the shadow, and from all sides one heard complaints of the slackness of business, of accumulation of stocks, and of absence of buyers. In the first place the Siberians were less numerous than they have ever been before, and the Siberian Far-Eastern trade was greatly reduced, for with the military in occupation of the line there was no means of transporting any but the least bulky goods, and those only as far as Irkutsk, by parcel-post. At the same time there was much less production in Siberia owing to the want of confidence and the disorganisation of trade. Certain kinds of hides had dropped from 1,400,000 in 1903 to 500,000 in 1904. Siberia manufactures practically nothing, for there is so small a market to supply that local manufacturers cannot produce as cheaply as the Russians and Poles, who have the whole Empire for their market. There is, consequently, a great export of ready-made clothes, cotton goods, and prepared furs from Russia to Siberia, the business being usually negotiated at Nijni. But this year all trade has been greatly reduced. The Siberians were given no credit, and they are even more in the habit of dealing on credit than the

European Russian. The Chinese trade, such as it was, including the import of tea overland, has fallen off very considerably. In 1903 the prices of furs were exceptionally high, but in 1904 a change of fashion and the war reduced them far below their normal level; but even so the Germans would not buy at first, hoping for a further drop. Hides and wool from Bokhara also came in smaller quantities, because in 1903 prices were bad. Little was done in the iron trade, for its one prosperous side — the provision of war material — is practically unrepresented at Nijni. Cotton importers from Bokhara fared rather better. On the whole, according to the most optimistic reports, the amount of business done was about 20 or 25 per cent. below the average, and little more than half what it had been in 1903, which was a good year. The reduction in the number of visitors, according to the testimony of the station officials, was somewhat similar.

Nijni, in spite of its relatively declining importance, is still regarded as a sort of rough barometer of Russian trade — at all events of that of Central, Eastern, and Asiatic Russia. Consequently the diminution of business, which at the close of the fair was calculated at about 20 or 25 per cent., may be taken as corresponding to the general restriction from which that part of the country was suffering at the time. If we consider Poland and the South as well, the average reduction is even greater, and the situation has become considerably worse.

But to a stranger who had never been to Nijni

before, the spectacle offered by the fair is still wonderfully curious and interesting. As a piece of mediæval Europe and unchanging Asia with an infusion of modernity, it is unequalled even in this land of glaring contrasts.

CHAPTER V

THE VOLGA

RUSSIA is essentially a land of rivers, and is covered with a network of great waterways, which have always played a most important part in the development and activity of the country and the people. Every land has one or more typical rivers intimately associated with its history, customs, and commerce; in England it is the Thames, in Germany the Rhine, in Italy the Tiber, in Austria-Hungary the Danube. In Russia the rivers mean far more than they do elsewhere, for they constitute the chief, often the only, ways of communication in summer-time, and a whole phase of Russian life is closely bound up with them. Of all the Russian rivers the Volga is the greatest; the Russian has a deep affection for this vast stream, and speaks of it in endearing terms as *Matushka Volga*, or "Little Mother Volga." It is, indeed, a mighty river, 3,458 versts in length (about 2,200 miles), forming a basin three times as large as the whole area of France. Its greatest width in a general way is at Saratoff, where it is 2,000 yards across in the dry season and nearly 5,000 in the spring; but at Nijni Novgorod, where it is usually only 750

yards wide, it extends to 19,000 yards during the spring floods, when it covers all the quarter of the town where the fair is held.

For the greater part of its course the Volga is navigable; large steamers go as far up-stream as Tver, although in the height of the summer they cannot usually go above Nijni Novgorod. There are about 1,200 steamers of all sizes on the Volga, from the large and handsomely appointed passenger vessels of the "Kavkaz i Merkurii" Company to the small tugs and launches, not to mention whole fleets of barges, timber-rafts, and fishing-boats. Besides the Volga itself, some of its affluents, such as the Oka and the Kama, are navigable even for large steamers. On the banks of these three rivers many important towns have arisen, whose chief means of communication is by water. Between Nijni Novgorod and the Caspian Sea, the railway reaches the Volga at seven points only, and for the length of 2,231 versts (1,400 miles) from the sea there is only one bridge across it. There is no railway following the banks of the Volga, but only branch lines to the various towns situated on the river, such as Kazan, Samara, Saratoff, Tzaritzyn, etc. Russian roads are notoriously bad, so that the rivers are invaluable arteries of commerce, and, like Egypt with regard to the Nile, an immense tract of Russian country is "the gift of the Volga." But for four or five months of the year this and the other waterways are frozen over and useless for navigation, so that all traffic is diverted to the sleigh routes.

A voyage down the Volga is pleasant, full of interest, and gives one an insight into many aspects of Russian life and ways. As regards scenery, its banks cannot, of course, be compared to those of the Rhine or the Danube, nor is it as rich in historical associations as those great rivers, but it shows many varieties of Russian landscape — the great forests of the North, the "black mould" and agricultural area of the centre, the illimitable steppes and salt-plains of the South, while at one or two points there are even quite picturesque hills. But it is rather in the types of humanity whom one meets, both on the banks and on the steamers, that its chief interest lies. There are certain tribes dwelling by the Volga who have distinct racial characteristics of their own, forgotten fragments of the Asiatic hordes who flooded Europe in the Middle Ages. They are chiefly of the Mongolian or the Ural-Altai stock — Tartars, Mordvas, Cheremisses, Bashkirs, Tchuvashes, and many others. Besides these strange races, one comes across other Russians of all classes, and many Persians and Armenians.

The journey is one which can be made with a very fair degree of comfort. The passenger steamers are large, clean, well-built paddle boats, similar to those in use on the American rivers, with good cabins and decent food. They sail daily, so that the journey can be interrupted if one wishes to stop *en route*, and continued the next day. In the late summer, before the autumn rains, the river is apt to be shallow in parts, and steamers are sometimes stranded for sev-

eral hours on sand-banks. But the traveller who is in a hurry should not go to Russia, nor, indeed, to any place east of Budapest. In going down-stream it is often impossible for the vessel to steer towards one bank of the river owing to the currents, and if another steamer is sighted coming up-stream a white flag is waved by day and a lantern exposed by night, to indicate on which side it is possible to pass. In the shallow reaches a man constantly takes soundings with a long pole, and calls out the depth to the officer on the bridge.

Starting on board the good ship *Imperatritza Mariya Feodorovna* from Nijni Novgorod, when the annual fair was at its height, the quays covered with huge piles of merchandise, we thread our way carefully among the crowds of steamers of every shape and size, and steer out into mid-stream, whence a good view of the picturesque old town is obtained. We next pass a few suburbs and villages, and then get into an absolutely deserted country, with no sign of human habitation for many miles. The right bank is scarped and hilly; the left consists of sandy flats extending to an immense forest-clad plain. Villages of primitive wooden cottages appear at rare intervals, and there are hardly any isolated houses along the banks. But if the shore is deserted, it is otherwise with the stream itself. Craft of every kind are constantly passing by; great rafts of logs crawling down the Volga to feed the timberless South, processions of clumsy-looking barges laden with goods for the Nijni fair or for the other

towns up the stream, drawn by fussy steam tugs, passenger steamers, and many varieties of fishing-boats; the Volga is very rich in fish of many varieties, the most delicious of the edible kinds being the *sterlet*, a Russian specialty.

The first point of interest reached is the monastery of Makariev, a white-walled and battlemented enclosure glistening with golden domes, where the fair now transferred to Nijni Novgorod was formerly held. Makariev is now without importance, but it is a typical Russian monastery, built as much for purposes of defence against the wild pagan and Mahometan hordes constantly threatening the realm of Muscovy as for religious devotion. Hour after hour the steamer pursues the even tenor of her way, when suddenly signs of excitement appear among the passengers, and binoculars are levelled at another vessel coming in the opposite direction. Like ours, she is a paddle-wheeled passenger boat, but she is not carrying ordinary travellers; the Red Cross flag is flying at her stern, while bandaged men are seen lying about the deck, and a number of Sisters of Mercy are hurrying to and fro attending to their needs. It is a hospital ship full of wounded soldiers from the seat of the war. The Government is sending the sick and wounded back to Russia during the summer as far as possible by water, both because the journey was thus more comfortable for them and because the railway was congested with military traffic hurrying Eastward. One would wish to go on board and hear what tales these men

have to tell of the awful days on the Yalu, at Kinchau, or on board the Port Arthur fleet; but we do not stop, and in a few minutes the steamer is hidden by a bend of the river, and its wounded are conveyed away to be distributed among the hospitals of the large towns or sent back to their homes.

The first town we reach is Kazan. We arrive here in the early morning and stop two hours, so that there is time for a hasty visit. The muddy landing-stage is crowded with peasants in picturesque attire, *gendarmes*, and officials; among the throng are many Tartars, for Kazan is the headquarters of the Tartar tribes of the Volga. The town is several miles from the river, with which it is connected by an electric tramway — a somewhat incongruous means of communication in the former capital of the great Tartar Empire, where in past times the hordes would congregate to invade Russia and even Western Europe, spreading terror and destruction along their path. From a distance Kazan, with its walled Kremlin and many towers, looks picturesque and even imposing. But on coming closer the illusion is spoilt. Like most Russian provincial towns, it covers an immense area, and is divided up into long, dreary cobble-paved streets cutting each other at right angles, flanked by ill-built, unattractive houses painted in garish colours. Apart from the electric trams and light, the place has an unfinished, dirty, and God-forsaken air. Here and there are open spaces left unbuilt on for no obvious reason, adorned with a litter of empty tin cans, broken packing-

cases and crockery, and all manner of refuse. The Kremlin, or Citadel, contains several churches, one of which, the Cathedral of the Annunciation, was just then the subject of much talk, a miraculous *ikon* of the famous Virgin of Kazan having lately been stolen from it. For a people as devout as the Russians, this was an unparalleled and irretrievable misfortune, far worse than a military defeat. Close by is the Governor's palace and offices, and a high brick tower called the Suyumbeka, built by the Tartars. According to the legend, a Tartar princess, driven to despair at the ruin of her nation when the Russians conquered Kazan in 1552, committed suicide by throwing herself from its summit.

From Kazan we continue our voyage past a few wretched villages and small towns to the mouth of the Kama, the chief affluent of the Volga, by which the towns of Perm and Ufa in the Ural region may be reached. This was formerly the route by which exiles were sent to Siberia. Simbirsk is next reached, also a semi-Tartar town, picturesquely situated on a hill above the Volga, but containing nothing of interest. There is something terribly depressing about these ungainly Russian cities, vast in extent though comparatively small in population, and more like overgrown villages than real towns. There are very many of them scattered about over the length and breadth of the Empire, both in Europe and Asia, all very much alike, all dirty and uncomfortable, untidy, and, with a few exceptions, utterly devoid of anything worth seeing. They have numbers of

large, ugly churches adorned with graceless excrescences in the way of domes and pinnacles; there are large public buildings — the Governor's palace, the barracks, the hospital, in some a university or academy, and schools of different kinds. But hardly ever does one come across any edifice that can claim even moderate architectural pretensions. The country is rich undoubtedly, but everything seems to wither under the blight of the bureaucracy. There is certainly nothing to suggest cheerfulness in the appearance of the inhabitants. Every one seems oppressed by the unutterable dreariness and monotony of life, by the squalor and the sordid poverty, especially in wet weather, when the filthy streets become rivers of mud, and the cabs have only just enough life in them to bespatter luckless foot-passenegers from top to toe.

At a small riverside station we see our steamer taking in fuel. The Volga steamers all used liquid fuel, *i.e.*, naphtha, which is poured into the vessel's side, a sluggish mass of dark fluid. The possession of a large supply of naphtha, and other kindred substances, is one of Russia's most valuable commercial assets, and has been used for the development of many industries in the place of coal.

Early in the morning, after passing the picturesque Zhigulievsky hills shooting up like sugar-cones, and the great curve of the river beyond, we reach Samara. It is raining, and the quays are almost impassable with slush. There is nevertheless a good deal of activity, for Samara is a com-

mercial town of some importance, and a station on the Siberian railway, and the junction for the branch line to Orenburg, now extended to Tashkent. Samara is also the centre of a large agricultural district, and one sees long caravans of camels laden with produce coming in from across the plains, led by Tartars. At present there is more movement than usual, for a great concentration camp has been established here, where troops are collected from all parts of European Russia by rail or river, to be forwarded to the seat of the war.

From Samara we continue down-stream, and some hours later we reach the great Alexander II. viaduct across the Volga at Batraki, consisting of thirteen arches and over 1,400 yards in length. This bridge is the only one across the Volga below Rybinsk, and was consequently of enormous importance during the war. It was said that soon after the outbreak of hostilities the Japanese made an attempt to blow it up. It is carefully guarded by troops stationed at each end of it and in boats on the river. A few minutes later a long troop-train is seen passing along the bank, hurrying eastward with reinforcements for General Kuropatkin. Each train consists of about forty cars, with twenty to forty men in each. They travel as a rule for three days on end, and then stop for a day's rest. During the period when reinforcements were being forwarded most actively, I believe that an average of a little over a thousand men per day were dispatched to Manchuria, or about 35,000 a month. But later

there seem to have been several interruptions, as the Siberian railway, which had been originally lightly and badly laid, could not stand the constant strain of heavy traffic, and was constantly breaking down. Prince Khilkoff, the Minister of Ways of Communication, has done wonders with the line, devoting himself with untiring energy to his task. Trained on the American railways, where he began by serving in the humblest capacities, he has acquired a good deal of Yankee grit. Soon after the outbreak of the war he fixed his headquarters at Irkutsk, and constantly travelled up and down the line to see that everything was in order, personally superintending the minutest details. He had a number of new sidings and stations built, and on one occasion, while travelling over a section of the line to inspect the works, he asked one of the officials why his train had not passed a certain new station which he had ordered, paid for, and, he was told, had been built. "Oh, your Excellency," was the reply, "we passed it in the night." The Prince consulted his time schedule, and, not being satisfied that this could have been the case, he had the train stopped and returned on his tracks; but no station was visible at the spot where it should have stood. The feelings of the responsible officials are more easily imagined than described, but afterwards that station was built. By energy and persistence of this kind the management of the Siberian railway constituted the one bright spot in the chaos of incompetence and confusion which has characterised

Russian military organisation during the war. Every one confidently predicted the breakdown of the line, but it certainly held out wonderfully for a long time, even if it is now beginning to give way under the terrible strain. Russia owes more to Prince Khilkoff than to any of her generals.

At the next stopping-place, Syzran, we witnessed a sight which brought us once again into contact with the war. A number of reservists who have been ordered to the front are taking leave of their families; great bearded khaki-clad men of about forty years of age were crying like children at parting from those whom they were perhaps never to see again. They had been called away from their fields or their trades in some remote village and ordered to fight for Tsar and country. In many cases they were the sole support of the family, and once they are away the field lies untilled, the harvest ungathered, and the wife and children suffer hunger. While these good-byes are being said on the quay, a Russian lady of high rank on the first-class deck is watching the scene with intense interest and emotion. She too has a son serving in Manchuria, from whom she has had no news for many weeks, and is desperately anxious. The war has placed rich and poor, prince and peasant, on an equal footing; both feel equal anxiety, even if the material hardship is greatest among the humbler classes. All are united in deploring the war as a terrible evil; only an irascible retired Colonel of Cossacks is without sympathy, and bursts into a

passion at the sight of soldiers in tears. He is with difficulty restrained from ordering them to be placed under arrest at once for not being cheerful and light-hearted!

Among the passengers one hears many opinions on the war. The company on board is a fairly representative collection of Russian types; there is an aristocratic family on their way to the mineral baths of the Caucasus, a *Juge d'Instruction* on an official tour, a dealer in rubber goods returning from Nijni, a young man from Kazan who has just completed his university studies abroad and is returning home full of German philosophy and revolutionary ideas, and a number of students in the ungainly uniforms which a *plus quam* paternal Government obliges them to wear. Among the third-class passengers are Russian peasants on their way to or from the market, Persians and Armenians going home to their native wilds after the Nijni Novgorod fair, and many other nondescript characters. From these various individuals one may hear different opinions on the war and, though expressed with more caution, on Russian internal affairs. No one regards the campaign with enthusiasm, and many speak contemptuously of the Russian commanders' strategic ability, while the value of the advantages which may possibly accrue to Russia from it, even if the outcome is eventually successful, are looked upon as more than problematical. Occasionally one will hear surprising opinions as to its probable duration; one man, an inferior Government official,

expressed the view that it would end in three months with the complete triumph of Russia! Concerning internal affairs one is warned to be cautious, for who knows whether the friendly soap-boiler from Samara who waxes wroth on the iniquities of the late M. von Plehve, or the voluble old lady who expresses an enthusiastic wish to see a democratic constitution proclaimed in Russia at once, may not be agents of the Secret Police who will report all that you say in reply, and a good deal that you have not, to the chiefs of that celebrated body? At least this is what I was warned against, but I am pretty well convinced, as I have said elsewhere, that the cleverness and fiendish ingenuity of the Russian Secret Service is entirely overrated; the police organisation is oppressive and far-reaching, no doubt, but as to its skill in detecting offences, political or otherwise, that is another story.

Sixteen hours after Syzran comes Saratoff, where I left the steamer to pursue its placid course through the monotonous Caspian salt-plain to Astrakhan, the home of caviare. Saratoff is a town of some 140,000 inhabitants, very like any other Russian provincial town in most respects, but somewhat more prosperous in appearance, a little more busy-looking than many others, probably on account of the large German population settled here since the days of Catherine II. A considerable number of troops were being concentrated here from various mobilised districts in Southern Russia, together

with a quantity of new field batteries. Their object was to reinforce the army in the Far East, but it was whispered throughout Russia that at all events a part of them were going to Central Asia and the Afghan frontier. For what purpose? It is believed in many quarters that an immense concentration has been effected in that part of the world with a view to a possible war with England. According to others this military activity is due to the fear of a revolution among the fanatical Mahometans of Bokhara and Khiva, where the news of Russian defeats has made a deep impression. Another explanation which I have heard on good authority, and believe to be the most probable, is that troops were collected in Central Asia just before the war and soon after it had begun, when it was still believed in Russia that the campaign would be a walk-over. England, the Russian Government thought, might wish to intervene to save her ally from the consequences of defeat, and then Russia, with a large army in Central Asia, could make demonstrations and menaces on the Afghan frontier, so as to counteract any possible British action in the Far East. As the result has turned out so differently, the sending of troops to Central Asia was reduced, but a large army is always stationed there even in normal times, and it may possibly have been strengthened during the war from the fear of a native rising.

CHAPTER VI

PROVINCIAL RUSSIA

ST. PETERSBURG and Moscow show us Russia in its most active and living stage, in its extreme form, but they are not typical of the greater part of the country. Apart from the vast rural districts where 85 per cent. of the population dwell, the two capitals give us an incomplete idea even of Russian urban life, of which in the provincial towns we see an entirely different aspect. One of the most characteristic features of the country, in which it differs so greatly from Western Europe, is the absence of antiquity. If we exclude Moscow, Kiev, Nijni Novgorod, Great Novgorod, Vladimir, Yaroslavl, Rostoff, and one or two other places, where a few Byzantine churches or the remains of walled Kremlins still survive from mediæval times, the Russian towns are entirely new. I do not speak of the subject lands like the Baltic provinces, the Caucasus, or Central Asia, which are rich in monuments of ancient civilisation, but of Russia proper. We may visit town after town, scattered over an immense area, and never see a building more than a hundred years old, no mediæval churches, built up by the toil of generations of devout hands,

no old *châteaux* of the nobility, no palaces rich in pictures, no splendid villas, no town halls round which city life seethed and surged; it is all one dead level of monotony and unprogressive modernity. This is largely due to the fact that if we take away the independent republics of Pskoff, Novgorod, and Vyatka, Russia has no local history. There was the Court where the Tsar held state surrounded by his *boyars*, and the plains which fed the population and provided soldiers for the wars. The towns were simply centres for the neighbouring agricultural districts, where the peasants congregated on market days to sell their produce or buy stores. The great majority of them were and are still overgrown villages. All the activity of Russian life was absorbed and concentrated by the State and by agriculture, which left no room for local development. There is hardly any local patriotism. You seldom find a Russian proud of being a citizen of Simbirsk or of Elisavetgrad, and indeed it would be difficult to conceive of such a thing — when one has seen Simbirsk and Elisavetgrad.

Every building was erected with a view to temporary needs alone, generally of wood, easy to build, easy to pull down and rebuild, and easiest of all to burn. In the South and East the Tartars were continually pressing forward for many centuries, and then slowly driven back. Southern Russia only began to be conquered by Peter the Great, and the conquest was completed by Catherine II. The country then was a vast desert, but she and her

minister Patiomkin founded a number of new cities like Ekaterinoslav and Odessa, and created "New Russia" as it is rightly called, an immense and precious addition to the dominions of the Muscovite Tsars.

In more recent times the industrial movement of South Russia has given fresh life to some of these towns and created others still, for large agglomerations of people have grown up around important iron works — as, for instance, round the New Russia Company's establishment at Yuzovo, where a town of 37,000 inhabitants has sprung up in thirty-four years.

To the tourist in search of the picturesque, accustomed to the variety and beauty of Tuscan hill-towns, to Rhine eyries, or to the glowing splendour of the East, Russian provincial towns would be the abomination of desolation. But from the point of view of social and political development, they have many features of interest. They are isolated from each other, separated by enormous distances and imperfect communications; their inhabitants are utterly ignorant of what is going on elsewhere, while provincial affairs are almost unknown in the capital, for the censorship of the press is in nothing so severe (until the last few months) as in connection with these matters. The provincial journals, with few exceptions, are all submitted to the preventive censorship,[1] and in many large towns there is no

[1] *I.e.*, every article or paragraph must receive the approval of the censor before it can be published.

local newspaper at all save the Official Gazette, or *Gubiernskiya Viedomosti*, which is edited by an official, limits itself to official announcements, and appears usually one to three times a week. The arbitrary acts of a Governor, the corruption of an official, the brutality of the *gendarmes* or Cossacks, are never mentioned, and remain unknown to all save those who have heard of them by word of mouth, or from a revolutionary news-sheet; the local papers are forbidden even to allude to such events occurring in their own town. In this they bear some resemblance to the Turkish journals, regaling their readers with essays on Irish Home Rule, anecdotes of the Dowager-Empress of China, or accounts of the habits of the natives of the Mosquito Coast, but not publishing a line on what interests the province itself. Now the censorship has been greatly relaxed in the two capitals, but it is still maintained in the provinces. Here, for instance, is a list of subjects which the papers of one large provincial town are forbidden to mention: descriptions of love scenes, criticisms on reactionary journals, the mention of trade unions, criticisms of the acts of police officials, the mention of the name of Gorky, accounts of the religion of the Japanese, praises of Tolstoy, the word "bureaucracy," the names of certain diseases, the enumeration of elementary schools, facts concerning the bad organisation of the local hospital and the barracks, criticisms of the articles by Krushevan (the instigator of the Kishinieff massacres).

The power of a provincial Governor is enormous. In St. Petersburg and Moscow there is a faint shadow of public opinion, and there is European opinion, of which the rulers of Russia are sometimes really afraid. But in the provinces a Governor is absolute master, with practically unlimited authority.

Yet in spite of these restrictions some of the provincial towns have become noted as centres of disaffection and disturbance, giving great trouble to the Satraps sent to govern them, and causing much annoyance and many sleepless nights to the Ministers of State in St. Petersburg. The towns of southern and south-western Russia above all others have acquired a reputation for turbulence, possibly on account of the mixture of the population, which is principally Little Russian and Jewish; the Little Russians seem to be more energetic and hard-working, and at the same time more independent than the somewhat shiftless Great Russians, while the Jewish element has been driven by persecution to revolt. The industrial movement, which has concentrated large bodies of workmen in certain towns, has provided a further element of disorder, and the Socialist agitators have done much to rouse them against the Government. The present war has provoked exceptional discontent in many of the provincial towns, and indeed it is there that the mobilisation riots first began and were most severe.

Long, broad, dusty streets, ill-paved and not over clean, flanked by houses of a nondescript architec-

ture, usually two stories high, in which blue, red, yellow, or magenta stucco is predominant, some fairly well-stocked shops, huge signboards, the glittering domes of large flamboyant Orthodox churches, a couple of handsome theatres, three forlorn and desolate-looking cafés, and a smelly canal — that is Kharkoff, a provincial town of 20,000 inhabitants, eighteen hours to the south of Moscow. The suburbs consist of wooden hovels, the public gardens are untidy and bedraggled; the distances, owing to the smallness of the houses, are enormous, so that one makes large use of the tiny cabs or the wretched one-horse trams, whose rails the cabs use as a protection against the cobble-stones. There is a fine station, which for a wonder is not far from the town, and an excellent hotel whose French proprietor is well known to all the *gourmets* of Russia, and has a special monopoly of a certain vintage down Bordeaux way.

Kharkoff's importance is due to the fact that it is the centre of a rich agricultural district and to its being the official headquarters of the South Russian industrial area. It is on the border-line between the *Tchernoziom*, or "black-mould" zone, and the steppes of the South, the surrounding country being among the most fertile parts of Russia. The peasantry of the Kharkoff Government are fairly progressive; a large proportion of them are now using iron ploughs and beginning to adopt modern agricultural methods. There are several bazaars of the typical Russian character, where crowds of peasants

in the brilliant costumes of Little Russia congregate on market days, and the whole area is filled with carts laden with fruit, vegetables, grain, and bread. On a fine autumn day the spectacle is sunny and picturesque, and the atmosphere is even more Eastern than in the bazaars of Moscow.

Industrially Kharkoff has lost a good deal of its importance as a manufacturing centre. There is a large locomotive factory, a sugar refinery, a brewery, and a few smaller works. But the real centre of South-Russian industry has now shifted to Ekaterinoslav, and Kharkoff only retains its position as the centre of the business of industry. Various Government offices connected with manufactures, such as the factory inspection for South Russia, and the agencies of all the chief South-Russian industrial firms, and of many of those of the North and Centre, are at Kharkoff, where metallurgical and engineering congresses are held every year. There are five annual fairs, which formerly monopolised the trade of this part of the country, but the same causes which are bringing about the decline of Nijni Novgorod are operating here also, even more rapidly, and they have now lost all save their local importance. The wool merchants alone used to buy 700,000 poods of wool at the June fair twenty or thirty years ago; now they buy little more than one-tenth of that quantity.

The population of the Kharkoff Government is somewhat mixed; in the town itself two-thirds of the inhabitants are Little Russians. Of the other

third a certain number are Jews, for although by law Kharkoff is outside the Jewish pale, and only those Jews who are either merchants of the First Guild, handicraftsmen, or university graduates are allowed to reside here, many others find means of "squaring" the authorities, as indeed happens all over Russia. Kharkoff possesses a university, founded in 1805, a technological institute, and a veterinary college, with a total of over three thousand students. Its mixed population, its industrial connections, and the large body of students have contributed to make it one of the most active storm-centres of Russia. The university is closed more often than any other in the country in consequence of student disturbances. Unlike similar occurrences in other lands, the trouble is not between students and professors, for the latter are often in passive sympathy with the former in their discontent with the existing order of things. The university inspection is the chief cause of trouble, for the students can hardly be satisfied with an arrangement by which an outsider is appointed, nominally to inspect their morals, in reality to watch over their political views and otherwise act as a police spy. The Jewish question is also a cause of trouble in the university, and at Kharkoff it is sometimes very acute. The proportion of Jewish students is unusually large, and as they hold together very closely, disturbances of an anti-Semitic character are of not infrequent occurrence — the one kind of riot which the authorities do not view with disfavour.

The Kharkoff *zemstvo* is one of the most active in Russia, and although it is composed of Liberals and Conservatives in about equal proportions, its general tendency is decidedly progressive. Like all the other *zemstvos* it has an uphill fight against restriction and opposition on the part of the authorities. One of its chief spheres of activity is education, and the *zemstvo* schools are universally admitted to be better than both those of the Ministry of Education and of the Holy Synod. It also fulfils an important function by insuring the peasant against fire at a lower premium than any insurance company could afford. It keeps up bridges and certain roads; it provides village doctors, who are obliged to attend the peasantry gratis, and veterinary surgeons. It promotes agriculture by purchasing machinery and hiring it out to the peasants for a small sum, and it maintains an *agronome*, or agricultural specialist and adviser, for their benefit. It also subsidises several social institutions, such as the well-known Kharkoff *Obshtchestvo Gromotnosti*, or reading society for the advancement of culture. Other functions which the *zemstvo* formerly undertook, such as relief work in times of famine, have now been placed under Government control; but the results do not seem to justify the change, and a return to the old method is regarded as desirable and not improbable. The collection of local statistics for the purposes of land survey, which the *zemstvos* had undertaken, was stopped two years ago, because the Government feared that

the persons employed for the purpose were all more or less revolutionists and would spread disaffection. Reactionaries, indeed, are wont to attribute the peasant risings in the Governments of Kharkoff and Poltava in 1902 to the action of the *zemstvo* statisticians, most of whom were students or graduates, male and female. A Government college of statistics was created, where officials of this description would be trained in an atmosphere untainted with "subversive" ideas. But in the meanwhile no local statistics are obtainable, and the general cadastral survey has yet to be accomplished, an omission which causes great inconvenience to everybody concerned, and it will be long before a sufficient staff of the new officials will be of any use.

As regards the economic effects of the war in Kharkoff town and Government, they may be seen in a general reduction of business activity, a restriction of credit, and the disorganisation of industry through the mobilisation. Kharkoff, like the rest of South Russia, had been suffering from the industrial crisis of 1899–1902, and the various enterprises, started when Kharkoff seemed about to become an important centre of manufactures, were over-capitalised and ill-managed, and came to an untimely end. Business was beginning to recover when the war broke out and set everything back.

A night's run from Kharkoff — it seems impossible to find any two towns of Russia less than twelve hours apart — brings us to Ekaterinoslav, "the Glory of Catherine," a city which of late years

has acquired great industrial prominence and is the fifth manufacturing centre of the Empire. Ekaterinoslav produces a very different impression from that of most other Russian towns, even including the industrial centres. As a rule industrialism appears rather incongruous in Russia; the workmen are still to a considerable extent half peasants, and even those who are really permanent artisans have still a somewhat rustic aspect. Amidst the Oriental surroundings, the general air of carelessness, and the apparently temporary nature of all the buildings, modern factories seem out of place. But at Ekaterinoslav one feels oneself at once in a really go-ahead industrial city. The town, in fact, has no other *raison d'être* than industry. Founded by Catherine II. in 1787, it was for some time the residence of her favourite, Patiomkin, whose villa and park still exist; for many years it was nothing more than a third-rate provincial town, enlivened by occasional fairs and cattle markets. But since coal was discovered in the Donietz valley and iron in the Krivoi Rog district the town has risen rapidly in population, which has now reached 160,000, and has had quite a remarkable economic development. As the train crosses the fine bridge across the Dnieper, rows upon rows of tall chimneys rise up, belching forth columns of smoke, black, red, brown, and grey, along both banks of the river, and the quays are heaped up for a great distance with piles of iron goods, which are being shipped on to barges and steamers. A continual rumbling and

whirring sound of machinery fills one's ears, a heavy pall hangs over the town, and the atmosphere is thick with coal smuts. Throughout the city are mountains of coal, and stacks of iron rails piled high in courtyards and other open spaces, and processions of carts laden with metalware are constantly clattering along the streets. There is no beauty and no picturesqueness in Ekaterinoslav, but there is an air of genuine activity and business which is very unusual in the Tsar's dominions. It is a town which may already stand comparison with some of the great industrial centres of Germany or England; it is a business town existing solely for business. We are in the real "New Russia," the Russia that will some day occupy an assured place among the modern and industrial countries of Europe. Having ousted Kharkoff as an industrial city, it has become the real centre of the South-Russian metallurgical trades. Situated on the Dnieper and having direct railway communication with all parts of the Empire, half-way between the coal pits and the iron mines, both of which are to a great extent within the borders of the Ekaterinoslav Government, it is most favourably placed for industrial development. There are now some thirty factories, all of them producing iron and steel goods, at Ekaterinoslav and in the suburb of Amur on the left bank of the river; five or six of them are very large, employing several thousands of artisans each. The enormous majority of the population are directly dependent on these industries.

The town consists of one immensely long boulevard with an avenue of trees in the middle, and tram lines on either side going from the station to the Patiomkin Park, where all the business offices and the best shops are situated, with a few side and parallel streets of less importance to the right and left of it. The houses are of the usual Russian type, low, garishly coloured, and florid; there are some passable hotels of somewhat doubtful reputation, a couple of theatres and music-halls, where modest performances are given — modest only as regards the histrionic talents of the performers — some poor cafés, and two or three bazaars. The town is lighted by electricity, which, by the way, is in Russia a much commoner method of lighting than gas; but, as usual, the streets are vilely paved, in summer several inches deep in dust, in wet weather impassable owing to the mud. Beyond and around the town are the iron works.

The inhabitants of Ekaterinoslav are mostly Little Russians, but there is a strong admixture of Jews, for we are now within the pale. A good many of the inhabitants, of course, are natives of other parts of Russia, and have settled here on account of the industries, but the majority are from this neighbourhood. The industries are among those which suffered most from the crisis of 1899, for it was, as I shall show in another chapter, among the Southern iron and steel works that speculation and over-production were most conspicuous. Some of the most striking instances of industrial fever, mis-

management, peculation, and failure are to be found in Ekaterinoslav, and it is here that the French and Belgian capitalists carried on many of their most important operations. There is a considerable foreign colony, mostly belonging to those two nationalities, and vast quantities of foreign capital has been sunk in Ekaterinoslav undertakings. Some of the works are well managed and fairly flourishing, and likely, at all events after the war, to make great progress. But others are only just holding on from day to day and from hand to mouth, waiting, like Mr. Micawber, for "something to turn up," which something may take the form either of bankruptcy proceedings or Government administration, should the Government be willing to extend its already vast sphere of industrial activity. At Ekaterinoslav there is a good opportunity of comparing the methods of management adopted by Russians and by foreigners. One factory of which a foreigner was manager, although some of his assistants and all his workmen were Russians, was in apple-pie order, everything proceeded like clockwork, and there was a general atmosphere of serious business about the establishment. I may add that the dividends of the company were most satisfactory. The manager was a great believer in the industrial future of Russia, and was convinced that the destiny of the country was to be one of the chief industrial nations of the world. The military aspect of modern Russia was, in his opinion, the worst, and the one soonest des-

tined to disappear, while the many good qualities, intelligence, and capacity of the people would lead the Empire up to the highest degree of civilisation. Few foreigners whom I met in Russia, however, were as sanguine and optimistic. As a proof of the capacity of the Russian work he showed me some rolled iron, which he said had astounded even English iron-masters for the excellence and fineness of their workmanship. But, as usual, the cost of production was very much higher than it would be in Western Europe, in spite of the very low wages.

At another much larger establishment, which was under purely Russian control, things were proceeding very differently. On entering the works I was received by the manager, attired in the uniform of the graduates of the St. Petersburg engineering academy — that alone gives the note of what purely Russian industrialism is like, weighted down with the burden of bureaucracy. Confusion and carelessness were conspicuous in every department, and although many of the engineers were men of great ability, matters were allowed to go on as best they might, and extravagance and disorder were patent even to the uninitiated layman. The story of this undertaking, which is one of the largest in South Russia, is highly instructive. It was originally founded with French capital, and started with the rosiest prospects of success. But there were a certain number of Russian shareholders who, somehow or other, managed to obtain control over the business, and elected a Russian board of directors. The

affairs of the company were still apparently most prosperous, and large dividends were being paid. But every year the directors informed the shareholders that the exigencies of modern industry and the extension of business required a further increase of capital; new shares were therefore issued time after time, until the capitalisation of the concern became most extraordinarily inflated. But as a matter of fact the dividends had not been earned at all; they had been paid out of the capital obtained by the new issues. This naturally plunged the company into ever deeper difficulties, until finally the shareholders became alarmed and refused to authorise further issues. There those wonderful dividends ceased. This did not tend to allay anxiety or suspicion, and it seemed advisable that a new board of directors and new management should be chosen. A general meeting was held in St. Petersburg to decide on the question. The French shareholders owned a vast majority of the shares, so that the control of the company should by right have been in their hands, the Russian shareholders, who alone supported the existing board, being in a small minority. But at the last moment the Government came forward with a large loan which gave the Russian element the control once more, and the old board was re-elected; the foreign shareholders protested angrily against this arrangement, but the directors called in the police and had the room cleared by violence, which was the only satisfaction the Frenchmen obtained. The concern continues

to do bad business, the shares now merely serve as playthings on the Stock Exchanges of Paris and St. Petersburg, and it is doubtful whether the shareholders will ever see any of their money again.

The population of permanent artisans at Ekaterinoslav is increasing, as the nature of the particular industries which are practised here necessitates long experience, but there is still a fairly large number of temporary workers, although the managers do all they can to tempt them to settle. The iron-workers of South Russia are beginning to form a distinct and intelligent class of men, who are becoming more and more conscious of their rights and duties. Two years ago the first peaceful strike occurred, the men behaving in an exemplary fashion. Wages are low on the whole, ranging from 70 kopeks a day (about 1s. 6d.), no lodging or food being provided, and the large number of holidays reduces the monthly and yearly averages still further. But the skilled foremen and workmen are paid much more highly, sometimes to an extent which might seem almost exaggerated if we did not reflect on the difficulty of obtaining such labour. In the same way the managers and engineers, especially foreigners, often receive very large salaries, much higher than they would even in England, £1,000 a year being quite a usual amount for men who are far from being at the top of their profession.

The effects of the war in Ekaterinoslav were felt as usual in the general stagnation of business, the cancelling of orders, and the absence of activity. A

A PROCESSION OF TERRORISTS CARRYING THE RED FLAG
THROUGH THE STREETS OF WARSAW

few establishments were executing orders for the Government, but the bulk of the contracts which kept the Ekaterinoslav mills going were for peace purposes, and these were all suspended or reduced. Several of the managers with whom I discussed the subject hoped that Russia would have a great industrial revival after the war, but they pinned their faith on Government orders — the second track for the Siberian railway, further railway extensions, armaments, and public works of all kinds. They seem to have lost hope in the ordinary public market, which is hardly surprising under the circumstances, but it is not an encouraging symptom, and one cannot yet believe in the genuineness of an industrial revival unless it is based on real and general needs.

As for opinion on the war, it excited no more enthusiasm here than it did in other parts of Russia, if anything rather less. The working-men read the papers and war telegrams, or listened to others reading them, but their chief preoccupation was to avoid being called out to serve at the front. The mobilisation at the time of my visit had already led to several disturbances, and the levies of turbulent Ekaterinoslav recruits had to be escorted by other less recalcitrant regiments. On some occasions the disturbances had ended in outbursts of anti-Semitism, and the reservists had pillaged Jewish shops and houses; others were not so discriminating, and simply broke out into disorders of a general character, as a protest against the mobilisation. There are a

great many revolutionary elements among the industrial population of Ekaterinoslav, and the Socialist propaganda is making rapid progress.

The Government of Ekaterinoslav contains a number of other industrial centres besides the capital, some of them towns which have grown up round one large factory. The whole of this part of Russia is studded with coal-pits and iron and steel works; from the train, especially at night, one sees blazing furnaces glaring up on all sides, a spectacle reminding one of a journey through the English "Black Country."

Through the kindness of the management of the New Russia Company I was able to visit their large works at Yuzovo, which is the oldest and most important of the South-Russian metallurgical establishments. Although this cannot be regarded as a typically Russian establishment, for capital, management, and the general character of the undertaking are wholly English, still, as most of the South-Russian works are under foreign influence of some sort, Yuzovo may be taken as a specimen of what can be done in this country by foreign capital and organisation combined with native labour. Before the first furnace was erected there was hardly a house or an inhabitant on the spot, and railway communication was non-existent. It has now developed into a vast establishment, employing close on to 12,000 hands and producing 200,000 tons of steel and 300,000 tons of pig-iron a year. It possesses its own coal-pits on the estate, its iron-mines in the

Krivoi Rog, and its own railway connecting Yuzovo with the Government lines. Round the works a town has grown up which, including the *employés* and their families, has now some 37,000 inhabitants. Yuzovo is certainly not a beautiful spot; with its grimy atmosphere, its furnaces belching forth columns of flame and smoke, its vast ungainly mills, its dirty streets of blackened mud, and its rows of workmen's cottages, it bears a certain resemblance to the dreary vistas of a South London suburb. But its economic and social conditions present many features deserving attention. The combination of British capital and brains with Russian labour has certainly worked wonders; Russia has the natural resources and the labour necessary for great industries, but lacks the organising power, which hitherto only the foreigner has been able to supply. When the works were first started the artisans were, to a large extent, Englishmen; but in the course of time an increasing proportion of Russians came to be employed to supply the places of the Englishmen who died or went away, and to meet the increasing requirements of the works; at present they form the overwhelming majority, and under capable direction they prove efficient and hardworking. Their relations with the management are good. One of the great difficulties in the way of industrial development in Russia is the scantiness of the permanent industrial population. Here at Yuzovo the first Russian workmen were obtained from all parts of the country, as there were practically no inhabitants on the spot;

but the majority of them came only for the winter months, returning to their fields in the summer. Even of these only a certain proportion returned to the works regularly every year, so that the *personnel* was constantly shifting. But a permanent working class has been slowly growing up here as in other parts of Russia, and now a large number of the men are altogether attached to the works, and have settled down at Yuzovo with their wives and families for good. This is to some extent due to the fact that cottages are provided for the workmen, who can thus form a home, instead of being obliged to live in the usual barrack dormitories. The workman who has a home near his work gradually gets emancipated from his tiny piece of land in a distant Government, casts off the coil of the peasant communal proprietor, and becomes a factory hand in the European sense of the term. Wages at Yuzovo for the lowest class of workmen, of whom there are, however, only about 400, are 60 k. in winter and 80 in summer; they are as high as 3 and 5 roubles for the bar mill men, who are specialists; the daily earnings of the average workman may be set down at 1 to 3 r. a day, earned almost exclusively on piece-work. The number of working days is 224 in the year; the men in the coal-pits work an even smaller number of days, as they celebrate every holiday, whereas those in the blast furnaces work practically every day, merely taking an annual holiday of ten days or a fortnight on end. There is a colony of cottages erected by the company close to the works,

and in addition to their earnings a large proportion of the hands are lodged free of charge; others pay a low rent — 4 r. a month for two rooms and a kitchen, or 8 r. for four rooms. This state of things compares very favourably with the conditions obtaining in the establishments of St. Petersburg and Moscow. There is also much less overcrowding, and it is rare to find more than two or three persons sleeping in one room. Those workmen for whom there is no room in the colony are obliged to find what accommodation they can in the village, and there the conditions of life are naturally less good. In the company's cottages there is a cleanliness and tidiness and an appearance of prosperity such as I have never seen in the dwellings of any other Russian workmen.

With regard to education, the company maintains several Russian schools with 850 pupils, and one English one with 27. The number of Russian pupils is still far below the total of the children of school age, but the proportion is increasing. The teaching is of course according to the programme of the Russian Government, for school and teachers are under the control of the authorities, although the company pays for everything. A want is felt for some form of higher education, as the children leave school now at twelve, but cannot be employed in the works until they reach the age of fifteen. In the interval there is of course plenty of time and opportunity for them to get into mischief. There is a workmen's club at Yuzovo, but membership is lim-

ited to the English workmen and a few of the Russian foremen. A club for Russian workmen would be difficult to organise, owing to the unfriendly attitude of the authorities to all institutions of the kind, in which they see the beginnings of a political association, and also to the fact that Russians have not the same taste for clubs as Englishmen. In the same way, while the Englishmen go in for games, boating, fishing, etc., the Russians show little inclination for these exercises, and find more attractions in the *vodka* shop. Englishmen and Russians at Yuzovo live on fairly good terms with each other, and it certainly seems as though the English managers and foremen treated their Russian employees with much more consideration than some of the other foreigners living in Russia do. They all have a high opinion of the skill and working powers of the *mujik*, although in other respects — sobriety, morality, education, and honesty — they regard him as far inferior to the artisan of Western Europe. There is not much social contact between the English foremen and workmen and the Russians, the former rather looking down upon the latter. The contrast offered by English and Russian artisans living side by side is very curious. You see one cottage, which might be a bit of England, inhabited by an English family, talking with a broad north-country accent, while the next, in spite of being fairly clean and tidy, as compared with other workmen's dwellings, is unmistakably Russian. Establishments of this kind, besides adding to the

wealth of Russia, undoubtedly exercise an educating influence on the people, and are helping to convert primitive and ignorant peasants into more or less civilised human beings.

CHAPTER VII

THE BLACK SEA PORTS

THE shores of the Black Sea undoubtedly are one of the most fertile regions of the world. Throughout the ages the political and commercial dominion of these lands has been an object of rivalry between many great Powers. Empires have grown up and disappeared in the struggle for them. The Greeks were the first to establish a civilisation there, and we find traces of Hellenic influence in the Crimea, at Olbia, at Trebizond, along the coasts of the Caucasus. Flourishing Greek colonies arose by the waters of the Euxine, and reached a very high degree of wealth and culture. On the southern coasts important kingdoms were founded, while to the north there were numerous active commercial settlements, which had very little political history. But their prosperity must have been considerable, to judge by the splendid remains unearthed at Chersonnese, Kertch, and other spots, and by the magnificent collections of gold ornaments of the very best Greek period, which have been sent to the Hermitage Museum at St. Petersburg.

The Romans succeeded the Greeks as rulers of

these lands; throughout the Middle Ages, first under Byzantine supremacy and later when Genoese settlements were established along the northern coast, they prospered and progressed, and were the cause of hostility between different Powers. An active trade between the East and the West was opened up by way of the Black Sea, and the northern ports became the emporia for the export of produce from that vast and mysterious *hinterland* known by the generic name of Scythia. But the barbarians at last began to swoop down on the land from two quarters, and shed a blight over this civilisation from which it has not yet by any means fully recovered. The Turks in the south, and the Tartars in the north, devastated the Euxine lands and arrested all commercial and cultural development. The great highways of trade were interrupted, and the land was cut off from all further contact with European civilisation. Finally, in the XVII. century, the Russians commenced to press southwards (they had begun indeed with Ivan the Terrible), and slowly drove back Tartar and Turk, until, at the time of the death of Catherine II., all the northern coast was brought under their rule. Catherine's successors added further conquests both east and west — Bessarabia and the Caucasus — so that now all the northern and eastern coasts are Russian territory. The southern shores are still under Turkish rule, and the western shores are divided between Turkey, Bulgaria, and Rumania. The XIX. century has witnessed a revival of the Black

Sea trade, and the Russians have spared no efforts to develop their great southern region, and especially its ports, and have attempted to re-establish the old Greek-Byzantine-Genoese commercial highway from east to west *viâ* the Euxine. If the whole of the Black Sea lands were under a really civilised Government, they would speedily assume enormous economic development. But as long as Asia Minor is under the curse of Turkish maladministration and fanaticism it can never become prosperous; while so long as the opposite shores are under the incubus of Russian bureaucracy, although it constitutes an undoubted improvement on Ottoman rule, they too cannot really reach the degree of civilisation and wealth to which their natural resources would entitle them. There is actually little to choose between Turkish and Russian methods of government, save for the fact that the latter are capable of correction, while the former are not, and that the Russian people are certainly more capable of improvement than the Turks, although up to the present they have been forcibly retained in a state of ignorance and semi-barbarism.

Southern Russia is indeed a splendid heritage for the Empire, and one worthy of a great people. There are the vast grain-producing areas of the Black Mould and the Steppe, which debouch on to the Black Sea; there are the wine-producing districts of the Crimea and Bessarabia; there are the iron-mines of the Krivoi Rog and other districts, and the immense coal-beds of the Donietz valley;

there is the Caucasus, rich in every kind of metal, in mineral oil, in grain, in wine, even in cotton and tea, although, with the exception of mineral oil, it is developed only to a very limited extent. Then there is the series of fine ports — Odessa, Nikolaieff, Sevastopol, Feodosia, Rostoff, Novorossiisk, and Batum — where the produce of the *hinterland* can be shipped and exported. A further advantage is that many of the great trade routes from Central Asia and from Persia pass through Russian territory, so that the commerce of those lands, once they are fully opened up, might be easily so directed as to redound to the profit of Russia. Finally, there is a large, growing, and by no means unintelligent population, capable of the hardest toil and of great intellectual and material development.

And yet there seems to be an ill fate which pursues the Russians and prevents them from enjoying to the full the heritage which should be theirs. The Russians have done a great deal for civilisation in various parts of their Empire; they have executed many public works which cannot but arouse the admiration of all impartial outsiders, and they have built up commercial enterprise; but there is always a certain lack of completeness in what they do, something wanting to crown the edifice, which, to a great extent, stultifies the rest of their achievements. This is partly due, I think, to the fact that, while there remains as the basis of the nation the mass of *mujiks* and of those who have grown up in purely Russian surroundings filled with old Russian ideas, the new

civilisation suddenly and forcibly grafted on to them by Peter the Great and his successors is really foreign to their nature, and not yet acclimatised; consequently there are wide gaps where the two separate orders of ideas fail to meet. The paralysing effect of Russian bureaucratic methods is also very largely responsible for these failures. But they are also due to some extent to the ill-luck which on many occasions has dogged the steps of Russia. I will exemplify the success and the failure of Russian commercial and political enterprise in an account of some of her southern sea-coast towns.

In dealing with Russian affairs we must remember that Russia, even in Europe, is a colonising power. We are so accustomed to regard a colony as an over-seas possession of a European state in another continent, and as something quite separate from the mother-country, under a different *régime*, inhabited to a large extent by a different race, that we are apt to overlook the fact that Russia has colonial possessions in Europe itself. In Russia the expression "over-seas colony" has no meaning at all. The original Russia was the Principality of Moscow, and ever since the overthrow of the Tartar power the State has been expanding south and east, and even west. The mother-country and the colonies merge imperceptibly into each other, and what was the territory of a foreign Power or of a savage tribe yesterday is a colony to-day, and will become to-morrow an integral part of Russia proper. The whole of Southern Russia was until quite recently

a regular colony, as much as Turkestan or the Amur region are now, and to this day it still has a certain colonial character. The form of government, too, tends to confuse colony and mother-country, for with the exception of Turkestan and a few other provinces under a purely military *régime*, the methods of administration and the rights of the citizens, or rather their absence, are the same throughout the Empire. This is at once the strength and the weakness of Russia, and were a Constitution to be granted to-morrow the question of the relative rights of natives of St. Petersburg and natives of Erivan might assume a serious aspect. One can quite well imagine a Russian House of Commons where the representatives of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, Smolensk, etc., should meet together; but the question of admitting "honourable members" for Daghestan or Kaketia might well lead to difficulties.

On leaving Ekaterinoslav I pushed southwards to Odessa — a journey of twenty-four hours through a fertile but absolutely uninteresting country, passing a number of towns, all God-forsaken, all deadly, such as Elisavetgrad, Znamenka, Piatikhatka — towns without a history, without traditions, without anything to distinguish them from hundreds of others. Odessa is different. New, ugly, without any strikingly beautiful features, it has nevertheless a certain distinction and stateliness which place it above most of its sister cities. Its growth and progress, moreover, are a fact of which Russians may well be proud: it constitutes one of those phenomena for which we

are accustomed to look to the New World rather than to the Old. It has only existed since 1794, when that energetic woman, Catherine II., declared that a city should arise on this particular spot of the Black Sea coast where no city was before; Odessa arose, and in little more than a century its population has grown from nothing at all to about 450,000. It must be admitted, however, that Odessa has very little that is really Muscovite in its appearance. There is an air of solidity and wealth about it which is non-Russian; it is better built, its houses are loftier and more imposing, and its streets and boulevards, although not up to West-European standards, are cleaner and better kept than those even of Moscow or St. Petersburg, not to speak of the provincial towns, while the promenade in the upper town, overlooking the sea, is quite worthy of a great capital. The strong foreign and Jewish elements of the population are in great part responsible for this condition of things; one-third of the inhabitants are Jews, and there are large German, Greek, Italian, French, and English colonies. But justice must be done to the Russians in the mere fact that such a city can have been created and grown up to its present importance in so short a space of time under their auspices and government.

Odessa's position is undoubtedly a most favourable one. It is the largest and best harbour in the Black Sea, and constitutes the principal outlet for the grain-producing Black Mould zone. It is the largest city in the Government of Kherson, which together with

those of Bessarabia and Ekaterinoslav provide the chief part of the grain exported from Russia to Europe. The port is large, safe, and in direct railway communication with all parts of Russia. Until quite recently Odessa was without rivals in the export grain trade, of which it is even now by far and away the chief emporium.

The principal customers for the foodstuffs shipped at Odessa are Germany, Holland, the United Kingdom, and Italy. The total amount exported in 1903 was 140,000,000 poods; but besides this staple product, on which the prosperity of Odessa chiefly depends and is the basis of operations on its *Bourse*, there is also a valuable commerce in vegetables, in timber (which amounts to 10,000,000 poods), and other raw materials, while the import trade is fairly prosperous, its chief item being coal and iron and machinery to feed the South Russian industries. Of late years another important branch of commercial activity has been opened up, with its headquarters at Odessa, viz., Russia's maritime trade with the Far East. Until the outbreak of the war the Volunteer Fleet steamers, of which we heard so much last summer, plied regularly between Odessa and Vladivostok, Port Arthur, and other Far Eastern ports. The Siberian railway, of course, competed with Odessa's Far Eastern trade, but not to any very great extent, as freights by sea are bound to be lower than by land, and bulky goods, especially from South Russia, would naturally follow the cheaper route. The value of this commerce, from a Russian point of

view, was further increased by the fact that according to Russian law trade between the Black Sea and Russian ports in the Far East is treated as *cabotage*, or coastwise traffic, and therefore open to Russian vessels only.

But in spite of its many advantages the prosperity of Odessa does not show that tendency to expand which one would expect, and in fact the grain trade is actually declining. This state of affairs is due to a variety of causes, some of which are not altogether clear. In the first place the arrangements for shipping grain are very imperfect and call for improvements. The grain trade is in itself naturally subject to great fluctuations, for it is dependent on the result of the harvest, which in Russia differs from year to year more than in any other country, and the trade is bound to be a very uncertain quantity. Then, of course, it is affected by the state of the harvest elsewhere, which determines the amount of grain required from Russia. America is a very serious competitor, as in that country farmers are far more scientific and intelligent. But, apart from these external circumstances, the manner in which the grain trade itself is conducted is tending to become more and more speculative. Business in Odessa is now chiefly in the hands of the Jews, not of the larger Jewish firms, but of the smaller and more speculative ones, which, supported by certain banks, manage to outbid the more important and substantial houses. The small Jewish dealer goes up country himself to purchase grain, beating down the peasant's price

as low as possible, and then speculates on the rise and fall. This system has so seriously affected the business of the large houses that there are very few of them now left, and trade is becoming more and more of a gamble among second-rate firms.

Odessa is also suffering from competition nearer home. Nikolaieff and, even to a slight extent, Kherson are tending to become her rivals. Nikolaieff is more easily accessible by railway to a larger agricultural area than Odessa. Kherson is as yet only in its infancy, but nevertheless a few steamers go to Kherson for the grain, which they formerly would have shipped at Odessa. Another cause which arrests the growth of the trade is the imperfect organisation of the Russian railways, which every year seem to be taken by surprise when the harvest season taxes their resources. Endless vans of grain are waiting in the sidings for weeks and months at a time, until the bewildered railway officials are able to cope with them; at every harvest season the newspapers are full of complaints about these delays, and wherever I went I heard bitter criticism on the management of the lines. Consequently it is very difficult for foreign buyers to count on obtaining the promised consignments by any definite date.

Odessa possesses a few miscellaneous industries — sugar refineries, bottle and glass works, rope and twine factories, etc. — some of them on a large scale. But they, too, have been suffering from the general depression of most South-Russian industries, being to some extent the creation of the industrial fever

of twenty years ago; at present they are, with few exceptions, in very low water. The town is not well situated for industrial development, as coal, iron, and naphtha can only be obtained from a great distance, either by a roundabout railway route or by a combination of railway and steamship transport, which, of course, means heavy transshipment expenses.

If we try to examine the effects of the war on the trade of Odessa, we find it difficult to disentangle them from the other above-mentioned causes of decline. On one point, however, there is no ambiguity — Odessa's Far Eastern traffic has ceased completely. Several firms dealing exclusively with this branch of business have failed, and all the others have suffered severe loss. On the whole, the trade with the Far East may be set down at from 15 to 20 per cent. of the business of the port, and it largely affects the industries, which have thus again been hard hit. Business men as usual were hoping for a great revival of trade after the war, but everything will depend on what the Empire's future position will then be in the Far East, for under present conditions Russian trade can only flourish where it enjoys special facilities and favours. The grain trade has been affected indirectly by the war, in the fact that transport is more hampered than usual; and although the harvest on the whole has been an average one, in those provinces whence the Odessa shipments are principally drawn — Bessarabia, Kherson, and Ekaterinoslav — it has been very bad.

Taken altogether, therefore, the business activity of Odessa has been greatly reduced owing to the combination of the crisis, the war, and the bad harvests. I found the same restriction of credit, the same attempts to shirk the meeting of obligations, through necessity or otherwise, and the same reluctance to embark on new enterprises as in other business centres.

Politically Odessa presents some interesting problems, which have been accentuated by the struggle in the Ear East. Owing to its peculiar conditions, it is governed under a special administrative arrangement by a *Gradonachalnik*, or *Præfectus Urbis*, who is under direct dependence from the central Government.[1] The same arrangement obtains in certain other towns of Russia. The dominant feature of the political situation is the large Jewish element, forming nearly a third of the population. Although there are some wealthy business men among them, the great majority are extremely poor, and engaged in various handicrafts and small trades. One of their chief grievances lies in the obstacles placed in the way of the education of their children. Not more than 10 per cent. of the pupils of a gymnasium or of the students in the university may be Jews, but, as a matter of practice, this rule is usually relaxed in favour of those candidates to the university who have been waiting two or three years for admission, so that the actual proportion

[1] Some other towns are under a similar *régime* — Moscow, Sevastopol, Nikolaieff, Kertch, and Rostoff-on-the-Don.

of Jews is about 12 or 13 per cent. But this disability has produced here, as in other Russian universities, one very unexpected and, from the Orthodox point of view, undesirable result. As so small a proportion of Jews are admitted to the gymnasia and university, only the very best pupils are chosen, and the examiners are purposely more severe on the Jews than on the Christians. Practically no Jews are admitted to the university who have not obtained the gold medal on leaving the gymnasium. Thus the Jewish students are literally the chosen among the chosen, and they immediately emerge from among their companions and distinguish themselves in every branch of study and activity. They are not infrequently elected by their fellow-students as presidents of the literary and scientific societies in the university. At the end of their course they generally come out with the highest honours, and those who do not go into business become doctors or lawyers (the only liberal professions open to them), and rapidly acquire all the best practices. The result, of course, only helps to accentuate the bitterness against them on the part of the Christians. Owing to the various persecutions and disabilities to which they have been subjected, they are naturally not a very loyal community, and many of them side openly with the various revolutionary groups, or are members of the Jewish secret political society, the *Bund*. Their influence is considerable, and in spite of their disadvantages they have succeeded in obtaining by far the largest share of the city's business.

The causes of the unpopularity of the Jews are various, and economic questions are doubtless largely responsible for it. The Jewish grain dealer from Odessa goes up country in springtime and has a look at a certain field; he works out a rough estimate of what the harvest may be worth, and then makes the peasant an offer for it. The peasant is only too delighted to get the money down at once, and accepts, though doubtless not before a great deal of bargaining. The price is fixed, let us say, at a hundred roubles. The Jew then takes on himself the whole of the risks, which are many; the harvest may be bad, or it may even fail altogether, or be destroyed by frost, rain, or drought; he must look after it to see that the grain is not stolen; while the peasant is free from all responsibility. When the crops are gathered in, the Jew makes his deal with the Odessa exporter, to whom he sells the grain perhaps for five hundred roubles. The peasant hears of this, doubtless believes that the price is higher still, and considers himself cheated out of the whole difference. As a matter of fact, apart from the risks which he would have to run, he is incapable of dealing with the Odessa merchant himself or of getting anything like such a price for his grain. But he does not argue all this out; he simply considers the difference between what he receives and what the Jew receives, and calls the Jew a dog of a swindler. There can be no doubt that, in spite of their many undesirable qualities, the Russian Jews are absolutely indispensable to the welfare of the

country. Without them there would be no trade at all in many districts, money would not circulate, and economic activity would be paralysed; and even if they make larger profits than, with regard to the strict laws of morality and political economy, they ought to do, the Christian community has only itself to thank for not having developed a greater business aptitude. I have also been told by Christian merchants that the peasant has got so much accustomed to selling to Jews that he will not sell to a Christian, whom he mistrusts.

The presence of a large number of dock labourers and artisans, added to the Jews, contributes to the somewhat turbulent character of Odessa, which has been very conspicuous during the recent mobilisation of troops for the Far East. It was not easy to obtain definite information on the subject, but there seems to be no doubt that there were very violent scenes on the departure of the reservists. A number of women who had come to bid farewell to their relatives ordered off to the front — chiefly Jews — attempted to prevent the departure of the trains by throwing themselves on to the rails in front of the engines, shrieking and wailing in most blood-curdling manner. The reservists, who at best were far from anxious to go to the front, broke out into riots, and a large force of police and Cossacks had to be called in to restore order and see the troops off. Riots at the railway station were of frequent occurrence, especially when the detachments in question consisted largely of Jews, and the military

authorities seem to have made a point of calling out a specially large proportion of Jewish reservists. This has also been done in the case of Jewish doctors, of whom a relatively much higher number have been sent out than of their non-Jewish colleagues, partly, no doubt, on account of their greater skill. If the sight of men refusing or objecting to go and fight for their country excites but scant sympathy, the case of the Jews is exceptional. Men who are treated as pariahs, subjected to all manner of disabilities, and refused many of the rights which Christians enjoy, can hardly be expected to feel much patriotic enthusiasm for the Russian cause, or an overwhelming desire to shed their blood for their taskmasters.

From Odessa I went on to Sevastopol, the second harbour in the Black Sea. Since 1894 it has been converted into a military and naval port of the first rank, and is no longer available for commerce. The foreign colony is practically nil, and such trade as there is is purely local; Feodosia, the ancient Kaffa of the Genoese, has now supplanted it. But in the Sea of Azoff there is an active trade which, unlike that of Odessa, is growing in importance. This inland sea is very shallow; in winter it is completely frozen over, and even in summer it suffers from many natural disadvantages to shipping, especially from the high winds. But it is the outlet for another of Russia's great grain areas, comprising the Province of the Don Cossacks, the eastern part of the Government of Ekaterinoslav, and the lower Volga basin. While Odessa and Nikolaieff monopolise the Black

Mould zone, the Azoff ports depend chiefly on the steppes. The principal ports on the Azoff itself are Mariupol, Taganrog, and Berdiansk. But the most important of all is Rostoff-on-the-Don, which is a few miles up that river.

Rostoff has a very mixed population of 120,000 inhabitants, consisting of Russians, Circassians, Greeks, Armenians,[1] and other nationalities, for it is at the gate of the Caucasus, that veritable museum of races. It is of very modern origin; it owes its prosperity entirely to the grain trade, and is the centre of a network of railways which places it in communication with the vast grain area to the north. It has gradually cut out Taganrog and the other Azoff ports, and during the summer it has the practical monopoly of the corn export trade for this part of Russia. The grain is shipped on to steam barges in the river Don, and brought out into the Sea of Azoff; there it is transshipped on board large sea-going steamers to be conveyed abroad. The same procedure is often followed in the case of the other ports, as the large ships cannot approach within several miles of the shore. When a high wind is blowing it is impossible even for the steam barges to go up the river, which is depleted of water sometimes for several days on end, thus greatly disorganising the whole trade, and causing very serious loss to grain merchants and export agents. Sometimes, too, as the Kertch channel between the Black Sea and the Azoff is very shallow, heavily

[1] Including the suburb of Nakhitchevan, which is wholly Armenian, 150,000.

laden steamers have to land their cargo at Kertch, pass through the straits, and reship it again on the other side. All these natural obstacles are enhanced as usual by the very inadequate railway service. The Azoff ports, like Odessa, suffer from an insufficiency of railway trucks and from the happy-go-lucky methods of the administration, which has increased during the present year. The town is filled with wretched vagrants and wanderers from other parts of Russia, who flock to Rostoff in large numbers, as it has the fame of being an active business centre and capable of providing employment; this year, however, the supply is far in excess of the demand, as the war crisis has thrown many men out of work in other towns. I was at Rostoff at the time of the North Sea incident, and the possibility of a war with England was viewed with dread by the mercantile community, because 80 per cent. of the grain trade of this port is carried on in English bottoms, so that if war had broken out it would have meant ruin to the towns of the Azoff.

In winter all the trade of the Azoff ports is suspended, as the sea is frozen over. The shipping of corn is then partly transferred to Novorossiisk, on the Black Sea, a picturesque little town in a deep and well-sheltered inlet surrounded by high hills. The port is a double one, is well constructed, and provided with several breakwaters and moles. There is a somewhat turbulent population of 25,000 inhabitants, Circassians of different varieties, ruffianly looking rascals for the most part. The houses are

wretched and sordid, and everything has a very deserted and squalid look, although at certain seasons the bay is full of ships. The general atmosphere is quite Asiatic,[1] and but for the buildings round the harbour it might almost be a Turkish town. A branch railway joins the Rostoff-Baku line at Tikhorietzkaya. The chief feature of Novorossiisk is the huge grain elevator, by means of which 30,000,000 poods of grain per annum can be shipped; it is the second largest in the whole world. There are many reasons why Novorossiisk should one day become the chief grain port of the east coast of the Black Sea, for it is the best outlet not only of the Azoff-Don region, but of the cis-Caucasian cornlands, which are very rich and give promise of still greater wealth. The number of ships touching at the port is between 250 and 300 per annum. But even here there is one serious natural obstacle to fight against — the high winds, which occasionally make it impossible for vessels to enter the harbour at all. At times the icy blasts from the Kuban steppes sweep over the mountain and strike the sea at a certain distance from the shore. The effect of these hurricanes has been enhanced by the ruthless cutting down of trees which has been going on ever since the Russian occupation of the district in 1829.

To sum up the conditions of the Black Sea ports,

[1] Novorossiisk may in fact be said to be actually in Asia, for the whole of the Caucasus regions is counted as part of Asiatic-Russia, although some authorities would regard the Caucasus range as the boundary between the two continents.

we find that, while some of them are blessed with natural advantages such as Odessa, others, like Rostoff and Novorossiisk, suffer from serious inconveniences, but the latter, owing to other circumstances, are making relatively more progress. In all cases, while the Government has shown energy and broad-mindedness in developing the resources of the country and in constructing great public works, the daily administration is such as to hamper trade in every way. A rigid system of protection reduces the importation of foreign goods to a fraction of what it would otherwise be, and this, instead of fostering native industry, paralyses the economic activity of the country, which can never be developed fully until a more moderate fiscal system is introduced. Apart from the question of free trade *versus* protection, much remains to be done in the way of creating commercial facilities; and here too the war and the political troubles have greatly impeded economic progress.

CHAPTER VIII

A MONASTIC CITY

THE Church in Russia forms one of the most important aspects of the country's national existence, for nowhere does religion play such an overwhelming part in the lives and thoughts of the people. The attitude of the average Russian towards his Church is to our minds in many ways contradictory and incongruous, for while he is devoted to his faith and observes the practices of the Orthodox Church with the utmost care, he usually has nothing but contempt and dislike for the priest. In the same way he will cross himself vigorously when passing a church or a shrine, even if he is in the midst of a discussion on business or telling a ribald story. The act of devotion, however, does not affect the tone of the conversation, which is continued uninterruptedly. To explain this curiously mixed state of feeling it would be necessary to make an exhaustive study of Russian religious life, which would be out of place here. But in dealing with Russian affairs one cannot afford to neglect the Church, which is still one of the master facts of the situation. A visit to one of the great pil-

grimage centres will give us an insight into the place which religion occupies in the Russian social system.

It must be remembered that the national character of the Orthodox religion has been strengthened greatly by the fact that throughout Russian history nearly all the country's wars have been fought against enemies belonging to a different faith — Mahometan Tartars and Turks, Lutheran Germans and Swedes, Catholic Poles, and pagan tribes in Asia. Enemy and un-Orthodox have come to be almost synonymous terms. The great monasteries of Kiev, Troitza, and Moscow were rallying-points for the nation in its wars, and they were many times besieged, especially by the Tartars and the Poles; they were the repositories of the national standards as well as of the holy images and relics. This partly explains the hold which the Church has on the popular mind, and at the same time the feeling of horror with which the average Russian regards apostasy from the Orthodox Church; such an act is almost equivalent to betrayal of one's country, and is punished with all the severity of the law.

But the Eastern Church has remained crystallised and immobile since the X. century, mummified like the corpses of its saints, and although supported by State protection and popular fanaticism, it is an inert body, almost devoid of vitality. Untouched by the Reformation, its theology is but the rattle of dry bones, its clergy are ignorant peasants, its monks anchorites of the desert, its episcopate a

splendid anachronism. It has undoubtedly played a great part in national life, and perhaps its very rigidity, so repulsive to the Western mind, has served a purpose in preventing the Russians from lapsing into Mahometanism or paganism, as at one time it seemed likely that they would do. At present it contributes little to the civilisation or the moral and intellectual progress of the people, but merely keeps them enslaved and ignorant in the bondage of autocracy.

The Russian clergy are divided into two classes — the white and the black. The white clergy are the parish priests; they are married — in fact they must be married before they can be fully ordained. Until quite recently their sons were obliged to be priests too, and even now, although this is no longer obligatory, it is a very usual custom. If a priest's wife dies, he must become a monk; dispensations from this obligation may now be obtained without much difficulty, but remarriage is not allowed. The village priest is not usually a popular character with his flock. At best he is no more respected than the blacksmith or the cobbler, and in a general way he is regarded as an unlucky person who has the evil eye. Even to be the son of a priest is the reverse of a recommendation, and it is a taint, moreover, which it is difficult to hide, as both the surname and the manner of speech often betray it. The character of the average priest is not indeed such as to overcome popular prejudice. He is grasping, avaricious, and callous to the material and moral conditions of

his flock; he seldom troubles about visiting the sick or the poor, and his one thought is to extract as much as he can out of his benefice. His excuse is, that he is wretchedly poor, and must eke out the insufficient income of the glebe lands by means of the fees which he charges for his services. Every ceremony has to be paid for, and as there is no fixed tariff, nothing can be done without endless bargaining, sometimes over a matter of a few kopeks. The priest's visitations through his parish are similar to those of the tax-collector, and equally unpopular.

The black clergy are the monks; they are bound to celibacy, and they are obliged to live in monasteries. But, on the other hand, they enjoy the monopoly of all ecclesiastical preferment, and the episcopate is chosen from their ranks alone, which is the cause of bitter rivalry with the white clergy, who are condemned to a harder life, greater unpopularity, and degrading poverty. They lead lives of purely contemplative devotion; they do no practical good works, they have no missions, they are shut up like cenobites, and although some of the monasteries own hospitals, schools, asylums, etc., the monks themselves very seldom take any direct part in their management, but leave it to salaried *employés*. While the white clergy are very poor, the monks, or rather the monasteries, possess immense wealth. They own land, vast quantities of jewels and plate, and they receive enormous sums in offerings from the faithful, especially on the occasion of certain pilgrimages and festivals.

The most interesting of the Russian monasteries are the four *lavry* of Kiev, Troitza, St. Alexander Nevsky at St. Petersburg, and Potchaievsky. A *lavra* is a monastery which is also the residence of a metropolitan, and contains an ecclesiastical academy and seminary; it is in a sense the summing up of Russia's religious life with all its medley of superstition and devotion, simple faith and ignorance, mediæval asceticism and greed. The *lavry*, like most of the great monasteries, have the appearance of fortresses, and even St. Alexander Nevsky, which was built at a time and in a spot where invasion is no longer probable, is also designed on similar lines. Troitza is chiefly remarkable for its collection of jewels and precious ornaments, many of them used to adorn the images and shrines of the saints. Their total value is said to amount to 600,000,000 roubles, but this figure seems rather exaggerated, and it is even rumoured that a large part of the jewels have already been substituted with paste, though it is impossible to verify the statement. There are such quantities of these treasures that one really hardly realises their value; whole boxes are filled with precious stones, embroideries are entirely covered with pearls, and the masses of gold and silver vessels are so enormous that they end by conveying no meaning at all.

Kiev is in many ways more interesting and complete even than Troitza, and gives us a very good idea of the character of Russian religion, and incidentally of certain aspects of Russian history. Here

we appreciate the Byzantine origin of Russian civilisation, which has left such a strong impress on the architecture and even on the institutions of the country. It was at Kiev that one of the earliest Russian principalities was formed, and it was there that Russian Christianity was born, when Prince Vladimir of Kiev was converted by his grandmother, who had herself been received into the Church at Constantinople, and baptised his people in 988. For the next two centuries the connection between Kiev and Byzantium was of the closest. The heads of the Church were Greeks, several of the princes married Greek princesses, and Greek artists and craftsmen flocked to Kiev in great numbers to build and adorn the churches. The early frescoes in the Cathedral of Sancta Sophia at Kiev show that Byzantine usages, and even Byzantine costumes, were adopted in that part of Russia in the XI. century. The city was then very wealthy and splendid, and a great centre of civilisation and religion, which spread thence into other parts of the country. Foreign travellers admired its beauty and its riches, and it seemed as though Russia, which was already establishing connections with the other States of Europe by political and commercial ties, was destined to form an integral part of the European political system. As M. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu has stated: "it was an Empire established on a European basis with elements already showing a certain originality, a country which seemed called upon to carry out a special mission in Christendom,

and to act as a medium between the Greek East and the Latin West." But it was not to be. Before the new Muscovite State was fully developed, the Tartar invasion poured into Russia, laying waste the whole country and segregating it for centuries from the rest of Europe. Kiev was sacked and occupied by the Tartars in 1240, and even after they withdrew their impress remained for many generations on the land, and to a great extent still survives.

Kiev is in a really picturesque situation. Built on a ridge of hills rising up from the right bank of the Dnieper, it dominates the wide plains around for many miles. As we approach by railway we see the white-walled buildings and the gilded domes of the *lavra* standing out majestically amidst the pleasant greenery, reflected in the shimmering waters of the broad river. The train makes a long detour before entering the city, for it is a fortress of the first rank, and the *lavra* itself is indeed within the citadel, emphasising once more the union between the Orthodox Church and the military autocracy. The city is quaint and beautiful; it is intersected with valleys and depressions, and many of its streets are irregular, crooked, and curious, while others in the modern quarters have a certain stately dignity and attractive elegance implying prosperity and distinction. There are, besides the *lavra*, several really interesting churches of great antiquity. Sancta Sophia is one of the finest specimens of the Russo-Byzantine style, although even there one cannot but regret the ravages which later and less skilful architects

have wrought on the original conception of the Greek builders. Still there is a real grandeur and mystic solemnity in the darkened vaultings and the rich, sober hues of mosaic and fresco.

The *lavra* is on the outskirts of the city, and is reached by a long boulevard skirting the public gardens; at the end of it you cross the moat of the citadel, pass by formidable earthworks, and follow along a road lined with rows of booths for the sale of *ikons*, amulets, rosaries, crosses, and other devotional objects. There are other similar booths and shops in various parts of the monastery itself, for the trade in their religious wares, which are sold at a profit of 100 and 200 per cent., is an important source of income to the establishment. A massive, vaulted gateway, adorned with frescoes of no artistic value, leads into the monastery enclosure; immediately beyond a vast courtyard, with tall trees here and there, opens out, surrounded by a number of buildings — churches, chapels, schools, and colleges, printing presses, ecclesiastical residences, offices, and inns. During the great festivals (July 15th and August 15th) a great many of the poorer pilgrims camp out in this enclosure, where they are also fed free of charge; but the monastery derives a large revenue from the inns and eating-houses for the pilgrims of the better class. Many ladies of rank and fashion, and even men in high positions, make pilgrimages to Kiev or other famous shrines, which they regard as a religious duty. Peasants will tramp for hundreds,

or even thousands of miles, on foot, to worship in these churches. Then every pilgrim, whether at the great festivals or during the rest of the year, leaves at least a few kopeks and buys at least one candle or taper. Kiev is now, perhaps, the greatest pilgrimage centre in the whole world, and its popularity does not tend to decline, but is, on the contrary, increasing. While there were but 200,000 pilgrims in the seventies, there are now over a million per annum. The total income of the monastery, partly derived from property, but mostly from the gifts of the faithful, is calculated at £100,000 a year.

There are several churches in the *lavra*, of which the principal is the great Cathedral of the Assumption, or Uspensky Sobor — a large, imposing structure, with an elaborate façade and seven domes, some gilded, others painted blue and adorned with gold stars. To the right is a tall detached belfry. The interior is very rich and gorgeous, but flamboyant and garish, for although consecrated nearly a thousand years ago, it has been destroyed and rebuilt several times since. It is full of valuable reliquaries and *ikons*, some of them of genuine Byzantine workmanship, and is rich in holy relics of saints and martyrs.

But the chief curiosity of Kiev, the holy of holies of the *lavra*, the final goal of the pilgrims, is the *Peshtchery*, or grottoes, containing the bodies of the saints. The original founder of the monastery was St. Hilarion, Metropolitan of Kiev, who dwelt for many years as a hermit in a cave which he had dug

out in this very spot on the cliffs above the Dnieper. On his death in 1051 his place was occupied by the monk Anthony, who was afterwards joined by a number of holy men, including St. Theodosius and the historian Nestor. A regular hermitage was formed, and cenobites flocked hither from all parts of the Orthodox world, for Kiev had become famous for its sanctity. In the XII. century it was raised to the dignity of a *lavra*, and its *igumenos*, or abbot, obtained the rank of Archimandrite. There are now some six hundred monks in the establishment, which has become a veritable monastic city, the holiest spot in all Russia.

To reach the grottoes we descend a steep path to the right of the Cathedral of the Assumption, and then down a long wooden stairway roofed in, which emerges close by the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Here several monks in black robes and soft, tall, pointed caps are selling wax tapers, with which to light up the darkness of the subterranean passages, wherein we are about to be interned. A little procession of pilgrims is formed, stalwart, well set-up peasants all of them, bundled up in thick, untidy, woollen clothing, gaily coloured handkerchiefs, sheepskins, and high boots, typical agricultural labourers of Little Russia. A couple of monks take charge of us and lead the way. A small door inside the church opens into a dark, narrow passage carved out of the rock. We descend ever deeper and deeper into the bowels of the earth for some distance, winding hither and thither along a

pathway flagged with iron between smoke-blackened walls. Finally there begins a series of niches, in which the bodies of the saintly recluses repose. No less than eighty-one mummified monks lie buried here, wrapped up in red cotton shrouds, in open wooden coffins. A few of greater importance are honoured with damask shrouds and more elaborate coffins adorned with carving and silver bosses. Most of them have a collection of *ikons* around them, and at frequent intervals there are little shrines and altars lit up with feeble oil-lamps. Now and again the monk in charge removes the covering from the body in the coffin and discloses, to the awe-struck spectators, the blackened features of the dead saint. Over each coffin is the name of the monk — Hilarion, Spiridion, Antimos, Theodosius — but neither date nor any word as to his deeds and virtues. The pilgrims bow down devoutly before every grave, beat their heads on the ground and kiss the body inside, and cross themselves repeatedly. They do not seem to care who the saint was nor to distinguish between the holy, the holier, and the holiest; their object is to pay the tribute of prayer to each equally, so as to conciliate them all. A more practical expression of faith consists in the dropping of coins in the platters placed by the side of many of the coffins.

Weird as they are in death, the lives of these anchorites were stranger still. For years they dwelt immured in their caverns, meditating on holy mysteries and praying, but never going out into the world

to do good, nor praising God by aiding the sick and the afflicted. One corpse, that of John the Sufferer, is seen buried up to the neck, in which posture he is said to have lived for thirty years — a supreme expression of holiness according to Orthodox ideals. This aspect of faith existed even in Western Europe in the early Middle Ages, but in Russia it is still a living form, and still deemed most worthy of commendation. I have myself seen a monastery near Bakhtchi-Sarai, in the Crimea, founded only one hundred and fifty years ago, where the monks dwell in caves cut out of the side of the living rock high up on the face of the cliff, communicating with each other only by means of hanging wooden galleries. There the inmates continue to lead the same lives as the monks of the early Church lived a thousand or fifteen hundred years ago. Another sign of the rigidity of the Russian Church is the fact that monasticism has never split up into many different orders as did that of the Western Church. The original rule of St. Basil is still that of all the Russian monks, with but trifling variations.

A native of Kiev, a man strongly imbued with Liberal ideas, while speaking to me of that city, said, "Ah, how beautiful is Kiev, but how much more beautiful it would be without the *Lavra!*" By this he meant to say that the great monastery represents a stronghold of reaction and a powerful anti-progressive force. And indeed, the Russian Church has hitherto been wholly on the side of

autocracy, and the clergy has consistently used all its great influence to convince the people that rebellion, or even the mere holding of Liberal views, is a crime against religion. The priest and the *gendarme* are allies in keeping the people ignorant and enslaved. With the great hold which the Church has in Russia, it might have seemed well-nigh impossible that any political movement could make much headway. But recent events show that the masses are rapidly awakening and no longer obey the advice of the clergy as implicitly as they did before. Kiev, the great centre of Orthodoxy, is also one of the most turbulent cities of Russia. The Church itself seems to contain elements of a more Liberal character. When excommunication was pronounced by the Holy Synod against Tolstoy, the pupils of one of the great ecclesiastical seminaries made a public protest against the act — and this from youths all destined to the priestly career, and mostly sons of the clergy, was a most significant circumstance. Now we see that one of the chief ringleaders of the St. Petersburg strike movement is a priest. It is said, too, that among the younger clergy are many who sympathise with the political agitation of the Liberals. It is evident that M. Pobiedonostzeff does not represent the religious feelings of the whole of Orthodox Russia, and in any case the Liberal movement, whatever form the new Government of Russia may eventually take, will render the absolute domination of the Church a thing of the past.

CHAPTER IX

ON A COUNTRY ESTATE

RUSSIAN society is divided into four distinct classes, almost castes, unequal in size, viz., nobles, priests, bourgeois, and peasants. A whole volume of the Civil Code is devoted to the definition of these classes. The peasant class is by far the most numerous and its conditions constitute one of the chief problems of Russian social life. I do not propose to enter into the vast question of Russian agriculture in an exhaustive way. It is far too complex a matter to be dealt with in a short chapter. I shall, therefore, limit myself to a brief sketch of the main features of peasant life and of the problems connected with agriculture, illustrating them by a picture of a Russian country estate which I visited.

It is in the country districts that one sees the most characteristic side of Russian life, and some of the most peculiar aspects of the Russian people. Over 80 per cent. of the population of Russia are peasants, and agriculture plays a very large part in the nation's economic existence. The *mujiks* form a compact mass of some 100,000,000 souls, primitive, ignorant, superstitious, and uncivilised as yet, but

possibly containing the germs of great future development, and one cannot be surprised that their character and customs should appeal to the imagination of the educated Russian speculating as to the future world-influence of his country. Enthusiastic patriots profess to expect a regeneration of humanity and a new social and political revelation from the Russian *mujik*. "One has but to look at a map of the world to be filled with holy awe at the future destinies of Russia," wrote Nadiezhdin in 1831, and a whole bevy of other writers have dwelt on the great dormant forces of this mysterious giant, the Russian peasant. But as yet he sleeps, and has given no proof of intellectual activity or great capacity. His land is badly cultivated, he himself is without initiative, and hitherto all improvements have come from outside and from above. But there he is, in his vast bulk and strength, occupying a huge area of land, and playing a great part, albeit an unconscious one, in the destinies of the world.

In considering the peasant question, we must bear in mind the main divisions of Russia according to forms of cultivation. These are: first, the Northern forest region, in which only a small area is cleared for agriculture, flax, and dairy farming; second, the Black Mould zone, or Tchernoziom, which is the most fertile part of Russia, owing to the stratum of rich black soil on the surface; it produces rye, wheat, oats, barley, etc., in large quantities; the Southern and Eastern part of the Tchernoziom merges into the third division, which is the Steppe, drier than

the Central region, and almost treeless, but also very fertile. Then there are pasture lands scattered about in the Eastern, East-Central, Southern, and South-Eastern Districts.

The Russian peasants before the emancipation were divided into two main groups — the serfs of private landlords and those of the State or of the Crown. The former again were subdivided into domestic serfs, who were more closely attached to the landlord's house and person, and could be sold like chattels, and the ordinary serfs of the soil. The serfs of the soil were attached to the land and sold with it. They cultivated a certain piece of land allotted to them, and were obliged either to pay the landlord a certain tax (*obrok*) or to do a certain amount of forced labour on his land. The landlord could redivide the allotments, move peasant families from one part of his estate to another, or even in some cases sell them independently of the land. The State and Crown serfs enjoyed greater freedom and were generally better off. Both among the State serfs and the proprietary serfs, communal institutions existed, by which a particular piece of land was cultivated by a village community (*mir*), which distributed it in lots amongst its members.

The position of the serfs was one of the weak spots of the Russian social system, and serfage was an institution which the reformers were forever attacking. It varied according to the districts and the character of the landlord, but on the whole it was profoundly unsatisfactory. In 1861, after interminable discus-

sions and proposals, the act of emancipation was decreed, and, "by a stroke of the pen," 40,000,000 peasants were freed and endowed with land. The domestic serfs were emancipated, but received no endowment. At the time of the emancipation there were 10,749,845 private adult male serfs, 10,745,758 State serfs, and 900,486 Crown serfs distributed on 37,083,476, 75,438,118, and 4,333,261 *dessiatins* of land respectively. Thus the allotment per male peasant was 3.45 *dessiatins* (8.62 acres), 7.02 (17.56 acres), and 4.81 (12.03 acres).

The State bought from the landlords sufficient land to provide each of the freed serfs with a livelihood. It paid to the landlords a sum equivalent to the capitalisation of four-fifths of the amount of the annual dues which they received from their former serfs. This land constituted about one-third of the total estates of the landlords, and was granted to the peasants, who were to pay to the State taxes and redemption payment calculated on the value of the land. The land was not given individually to each peasant, but to the village communities, save in the places where individual ownership prevailed, and there it was given to individuals. But by rendering the village commune responsible for the taxes, the communal system has been extending ever since. The community distributed the land allotted to it among its members, so that each peasant family should have a lot, or *nadiel*, sufficient to live on. Sometimes the lots were distributed by *dusha*, literally soul, *i.e.*, by adult male inhabitant, but

more often to *tiaglo*, or household. In the former case they were redistributed only with every new census. But in the latter case the land was in a fluid state, the lots varying year by year according to the increasing or declining labour strength of each family. The law of 1893 prescribed that redistributions should only be made every twelve years, as it was found that the too frequent changes were fatal to agricultural improvement. The taxes for which the whole village commune was responsible were distributed in proportion to the amount of land of each family. In calculating the labour strength every circumstance is taken into account — the number of members of the household, illness, age, physical force, etc. The size of these lots varies according to the fertility of the districts, and even in the same village the lots vary according to the labour power of each family. The reason of the periodical redistributions was that no one should enjoy the monopoly of the best lands.

The object of this stupendous measure was to assure to each peasant enough land to live upon, and to prevent the richer peasants and landlords from absorbing the land of their poorer neighbours. The system of village communities was a very old-established one in Russia; its recognition and extension were in conformity with the time-honoured customs of the country, and corresponded to the system of family or house communities. The act of emancipation thus to a large extent merely confirmed the existing order of things, save that it freed the peasant

from personal thraldom. The system of collective responsibility for debts was maintained. The bulk of the pasture and forest land was usually left to the landlords, but such of it as was included in the endowment is worked by the community as a whole, and not divided into lots. The members of the community might not sell their share of the land. Every encouragement was given to the population to increase, for every son born meant a new plot of land. The birthrate is, in fact, very high — 48 per cent. — but the unhealthiness of the conditions of life, and the prevalence of famine and disease, raise the mortality, so that the increase of population is not more than about 15.5 per cent.

It was believed and hoped that in this way the peasant population would have its existence assured, and that the agricultural proletariat, that curse of many Western countries, would not exist in Russia. Every peasant having a plot of land need never starve; while the periodical redistributions would prevent any one man from becoming too rich. Russians prided themselves on having evolved a perfect system of rural social economy, which placed Russia above all her neighbours, and an idyllic condition was thus prophesied for the peasantry of Russia. But the actual state of things is very different, and the great majority of the peasants are in a condition of the most hopeless poverty. This has come about partly through the working of natural forces and partly through the peculiar character of the peasant himself. In the first place, while

the population has grown, the amount of land has remained the same, so that year by year there is less and less to go round. According to Polenoff, every 1,000 peasants had in 1895 twenty per cent. less land than in 1875 in the Centre, twenty-three per cent. in the East, twenty-four per cent. in the South. The periodical redistributions destroy all desire on the peasant's part to improve the land, as he knows that in a few years' time he may get another allotment; his one preoccupation is to extract as much out of it as he can while it is his. He limits his improvements, such as they are, to the little bit of land immediately adjoining the house, usually an orchard, which is his absolute property. Moreover, his education is such that he is utterly without technical knowledge, in spite of the efforts made by the *zemstvos* and other public and private bodies to spread agricultural instruction. Manure is almost unknown in many districts, iron ploughs are only just beginning to make their appearance. The actual amount of land possessed by each individual is not small. Two to three *dessiatins* (5 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres) per *dusha* is quite a low average, and many peasants possess even more, so that one family may have as much as ten to fifteen or twenty *dessiatins*. But it is so ill-cultivated that the peasant does not produce more than 18 to 25 poods per *dessiatin*,[1] while from 19 to 22 poods is calculated as the minimum on which one person may live. Out of this a

[1] Land in France produces 62.5 poods, in Germany 62.9, in England 112.1 per *dessiatin*.

certain amount has to be sold for export abroad to pay the taxes and other necessary expenses. The cardinal mistake of the endowment policy was that the peasants were given land without capital to work it, so that they were really expected to make bricks without straw.

The systems of cultivation are very primitive indeed. The obsolete three-field system is still predominant throughout the greater part of agricultural Russia — winter wheat is grown one year, other cereals in the second, and in the third the field lies fallow. In the steppes the land is cultivated for five years and left fallow for the next fifteen. In the northern forest region a tract is cleared of forest, cultivated for a few years, and then allowed to relapse into forest. The land belonging to the village commune is usually divided into three parts, corresponding to the three-field system. Taking the village as a centre, a number of narrow strips, equal to that of the lots into which the land is divided, shoot outward. Thus each peasant has his allotment in the shape of one or more long narrow strips, sometimes only five or ten feet wide. As a rule he has a share of each of the three or more divisions; his various shares are sometimes a long way apart from each other.

The joint responsibility for the taxes was for a long time a heavy burden for the peasants, as many of them went away from the land to work in the towns. It created uncertainty as to the taxes which each household had to pay; it favoured idleness and

drunkenness and opposed industry, because the hard-working, capable peasant was taxed for his idle neighbour; and it destroyed all sense of individual responsibility. Finally, after long studies and elaborate commissions, the system was abolished in 1903.

Another trouble is the tyranny of the *mir*. Sometimes the commune would impose on a peasant an extra plot of land which he could not cultivate, because he was working as an artisan and making more money, the object being simply to oblige him to pay more taxes because he is richer, even though his greater wealth is derived from work carried on elsewhere. In other cases the whole village may fall under the rule of two or three of the cleverer peasants, called *miroyedy* or *mir*-eaters, who manage to get hold of the better part of the common lands, and lend money to the poorer peasants; these are unable to pay their debts, save by giving up their allotments, for as they cannot mortgage their land, it is almost impossible for them to obtain credit. Many peasants owning land, but no cattle or instruments of labour or capital, cannot work it, while others have allotments too small to maintain them. Consequently, a large number of peasants belonging to village communes are obliged to work for part of the year on the estates of the landlords, whose permanent labourers are not sufficiently numerous. Others migrate to different parts of Russia, according to the demand for labour.[1] Others, again,

[1] At harvest-time there is usually a general migration from the North, where labour is in less demand, to the Southern agricultural zone.

go to work in the towns permanently or temporarily.

Another development which has assumed great importance in Russian agriculture is the renting of land. A peasant or a group of peasants rent a part of a nobleman's estate and work it for a year, or many years. The rent is paid in labour, in a share of the produce, or in money. Then, again, some of the more prosperous peasants who have made money buy plots of freehold land, which they cultivate in addition to their own share of communal land. A certain number of peasants possess private property only, and do not belong to a village commune at all. Some of these, called *odnodvortzy*, *i.e.*, men of one estate, owning a house and a farm which they cultivate themselves, form almost a separate class, and are much more independent and self-respecting than the majority of the peasants; they are, indeed, often descendants of noble families fallen from their high estate. The opponents of the *mir* system point to the fact that such improvements as there are in Russian agriculture are chiefly on the estates of a few progressive landlords, on the land of the *odnodvortzy*, or other property not held in communal ownership.

Then a considerable class of landless peasants has been growing up, besides the ex-domestic serfs of the landlords. A few are peasants who have renounced their plots, others are peasants whose communes, having reduced the plots to a minimum and having no reserves, defer the new distribution from year to

year, leaving out the rising generation from any share. Some Russians believe that in the increase of the rural proletariat will be found the salvation of the Russian peasant; but to be efficacious this process would destroy the *mir* system, for it is only by abolishing collective property altogether that such a state of things could be produced. These reformers desire to see, on the one hand, a class of richer peasants or farmers, who would be more educated and intelligent, and able to shed light in the Cymmerian darkness and ignorance of Russian rural life; and, on the other, a larger class of landless rural labourers to work on the lands of the former or on the large estates. But others attribute all the evils of their agriculture to the *mir* itself, and would willingly see it done away with. The great faults are the periodical redistributions which render the peasant careless of improving his land (although recent legislation has somewhat mitigated this evil), and the extreme subdivision and the cutting up of the allotments which make all intelligent cultivation impossible.

It is not impossible to dissolve the *mir*, for the law allows this to be done if two-thirds of the peasants' assembly agree. But hitherto the cases of dissolution have been rare, partly on account of the hold which old customs have on the *mujik*, and partly because of the fear which each one has of being saddled forever with a bad allotment, or one too far from the village. Also the peasant is attached to the system of distributions, because he fears that if

he had a piece of land in absolute property forever, his family might diminish and he be unable to cultivate the whole of it while having to pay the taxes. On the other hand it is noticed that those peasants who are better off than others like to buy pieces of freehold land from the large landlords. There is thus a tendency on the part of the large estates to diminish, which by increasing the number of tiny allotments does not certainly contribute to improved rural conditions.

The ills of Russian agriculture are not, I think, all due to the *mir* system itself, but largely to the ignorance of the peasantry. The joint responsibility for the taxes (now abolished) was also a grave burden. But the heaviness of the taxes is perhaps the worst feature of the situation. The taxes include the endowment indemnity which the communes have to pay in yearly instalments. The price fixed in 1861 was in many cases far superior to the actual value of the land, sometimes as much as a hundred per cent., and although the amount due has occasionally been lowered in some districts, and even remitted in the case of exceptionally poor communes, the total sum due is still much too large. In other cases the price has already been paid in full, so that the commune has become absolute owner of the land. But in the majority of cases there is still a part of it due which will weigh on the peasants for many years to come. The taxes, including this repayment, are often superior to the actual income of the land. Consequently, until the whole debt

has been paid in full, it is impossible to say how the *mir* would work in normal conditions.

Taxation is, indeed, a heavy burden; the amount per soul is 7 to 8 roubles a year. The *mujik's* labour is very hard, and often he must go to the towns or migrate to another estate, or exercise *kustarny* (cottage) industries to pay his taxes. The taxes must all be paid by a fixed date, although in many provinces that date precedes the harvest or follows immediately after it. Arrears of taxation amount sometimes to the whole of the year's quota, or even two or three times that amount. The Russian pays 5½d. in taxes for 100 kg. of rye, while the German peasant pays 22d. He must give 32 poods of rye for 36 poods of cotton goods, while the German gives only 11 poods. In the period from 1890 to 1899, the peasants of East and Central Russia paid £41,000,000 in taxes. But the Government had to pay them back nearly half in the form of relief rendered necessary by famine.[1]

And yet, it may be observed, Russia continues to export abroad an immense quantity of grain; this should be a proof of the peasant's prosperity. But as a matter of fact the peasant exports more than he can afford, he has to export his grain to keep up the favourable balance of trade, on which the whole financial system of Russia is based. In order to

[1] Article by Dr. Dillon, in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, March, 1905. On the condition of the peasants there is a vast amount of literature, both Russian and foreign. See especially A. Leroy-Beaulieu's *L'Empire des Tsars*, Sir Donald Wallace's *Russia*, E. von der Bruggen, *op. cit.*, Schultze-Gävernitz, *op. cit.*, *La Russie à la fin du XIX. Siècle*, etc.

retain it in the face of bad harvests and the increase of population, railway rates for the export of corn were lowered to such a point that it is now calculated that the loss on all the systems has increased to 18/1000 of a kopek per passenger, or a total of £8,050,000; prohibitive duties were imposed so as to make the Russian buy as little from abroad as possible, taxes were raised, and all expenses for the improvements of the material conditions of the country were reduced. The export of corn rose from 121,500,000 poods in 1864 to 552,800,000 in 1897. In the year 1897–8, when the harvest failed, 474,300,000 were exported. In 1901, 428,000,000 poods were exported, although that was also a famine year.[1] As soon as the harvest is over the tax-gatherer comes round, so that the peasant must immediately sell his corn if, as is usual, he has no money put aside. Thus, of the $22\frac{1}{2}$ poods per head which he produces, he exports over $3\frac{1}{2}$, which leaves him less than 19, which is the absolute minimum on which he can live (some authorities place the minimum at 22). Another terrible misfortune is fire; for, so long as the peasant cannot afford an iron roof instead of a thatched one, he is always exposed to that danger, and it is calculated that every cottage is burnt down once in fifteen years.

Of course this is not the universal condition of all the peasants, and there are brighter spots in rural

[1] According to the *Statesman's Year Book* for 1905 the export of grain products from Russia was 466,000,000 poods in 1901, 579,200,000 in 1902, and 650,600,000 in 1903.

Russia here and there. In the first place, the peasants of Poland, of the Baltic provinces, and of Finland are much better off, and most of the colonies of Germans on the Volga and in the Southern Governments, some of those Russian colonies which are not run on the *mir* system, and a proportion of the peasants on the large landed estates, are frequently much more prosperous, as intensive cultivation on a large scale produces large profits. Where the local *zemstvo* is energetic and capable the peasants are supplied with machinery on loan, they are insured against fire, and their agricultural education is cared for. But the poverty of the peasant is the great weakness of the Empire, and even before the war it was felt that, until the condition of the *mujik* was improved, it was not possible for the country to be really prosperous.

In order to give some idea of what Russian country life is like, I shall describe an estate in one of the Central Governments, which I visited a few months ago. The estate in question may be taken as a type of the more prosperous and better managed properties in Russia, and represents perhaps the highest point of Russian agricultural management. It cannot, however, be taken as typical of the whole country.

During a few days' stay at Kharkoff I made the acquaintance of a Russian nobleman, who was the land agent of Prince Y——, one of the largest landed proprietors in the Empire; he kindly invited me to pay him a visit at R——, the estate which

he was managing. It is by no means unusual in Russia that noblemen should be employed as land agents on large properties, where their position and importance is identical with that of landlords, the latter being often, as in this case, absentees living in St. Petersburg or Moscow, and rarely visiting their estates.

Baron M—— (my host) and I took train at Kharkoff early one fine autumn morning, and after a slow but comfortable journey — all railway journeys in Russia are both slow and comfortable — we reached the little station of R—— at one P.M. Our last two hours' travel were on a line of which Prince Y—— is the founder and chief proprietor, for it runs mostly through his land, and the principal object of its existence is the transport of his grain and his sugar. The station is clean and neatly built, and on the platform a large number of peasants are collected, shaggy, untidy masses of sheepskin, thick woollen stuff, brightly coloured handkerchiefs, fuzzy fur caps, high boots or cloth leggings; out of these bundles of clothing peer unwashed, long-haired, and bearded faces, sometimes handsome, sometimes repellantly ugly, with half-shut eyes, and surprised, sleepy expressions. Outside the station there are countless carts, small four-wheeled vehicles of a very primitive and clumsy description, looking as though they were about to fall in pieces, but had decided to accomplish just one more journey before doing so. Some are drawn by a single horse with a high arched yoke, called a

duga, uniting the shafts, others by two horses, and a few by oxen. These endless processions of carts are one of the most typical features of Russian landscape. Especially numerous are they in the neighbourhood of the railway, for the peasants use them to transport their produce from distant villages to the station. The arrival of the trains, which are few and far between, constitute the event of the country-side, and numbers of *mujiks* come down to witness it every day, even if they have no particular business to transact.

A carriage is waiting to convey us, a smart victoria-like vehicle, drawn by four large black horses harnessed abreast, and driven by a picturesque Jehu in a fur cap and a long green caftan held together by a leather belt adorned with silver bosses. We are soon dashing along the road towards the manor at a quick pace. I call it a road simply because it is the most convenient line to our destination, and because we are in Russia; but, as a matter of fact, it is nothing but a track of mud-ruts, as innocent of road-metal as a Turkish highway. Real roads, such as would be deemed worthy of the name in Western lands, are unknown in the Tsar's dominions, save in the Caucasus and in the Crimea. A track across the fields is more or less flattened out, a few posts are driven in, and there is the road. Stone is rare and expensive; and besides, if people are content with things as they are, why bother about improvements? The country is absolutely flat, with no hills or valleys or precipices, so that in winter,

when it is all covered with snow and the rivers are frozen, there is no need for roads at all, you simply follow a bee-line. In summer you make the best of these muddy or dusty paths, which, if you do not mind being jolted, serve their purpose. At the melting of the snows in spring and during the autumn rains they are impassable, and many villages and districts far from the railways are sometimes cut off from the outside world for weeks on end. But at that time of the year you need not travel; if you are in a hurry — well, you will have to wait a week or a fortnight; what does it matter?

The scenery of this part of Russia can hardly be described as interesting. We are in the midst of the black-earth region, the *tchernoziom*, celebrated for its fertility, but not for its beauty. I had heard so much about the black earth that I had come to believe that it was not so black as it was painted, any more than the Red Sea is red. But a drive across country on a rainy day, the horses' hoofs throwing up cart-loads of black mud, which leaves stains such as London even at its murkiest cannot aspire to, convinced me of the accuracy of the adjective. It is a dark brown or blackish stratum about two feet deep, formed of a calcareous substance mixed with decomposed vegetable matter, lying on layers of other formations. In dry weather it crumbles into the finest dust, and when it rains it assumes the appearance of coal. This vast black plain, one of the largest in the world, extends for hundreds of miles, absolutely unrelieved by the tiniest of hil-

locks, partially wooded in the North, but getting barer and drier as you go South, with villages at very rare intervals. At the time of my visit, which was soon after the harvest, it was at its very bleakest. One may travel for days without seeing anything to relieve the monotony of the landscape. The character of the scenery is reflected in that of the people perhaps more than in any other European country. The sharp contrasts of extreme heat and cold, the appalling sameness, and the hard struggle with the forces of Nature have all contributed to make the Russian *mujik* what he is.

After a drive of a few miles we reach the manor-house and village of R——, the residence of my host. It is a lonely spot from the point of view of social intercourse, for there are hardly any neighbours within driving distance. The other landlords, whose residences are many miles away, are all absentees, and everything is left in the hands of agents. The house itself, the type of dwelling of the more progressive Russian country gentleman, is a large two-storied structure with plain whitewashed walls and no attempt at architectural embellishments, but solidly built and commodious. The ground floor is occupied by the estate offices, while the upper story is the residential part. The latter consists of a series of large rooms comfortably furnished in the imitation German or Austrian style, which is becoming very popular in Russia. It is lit by electricity, and everything is done on a large, handsome scale bespeaking solid prosperity.

The *kantora*,[1] as the offices are called, is occupied by a large staff of clerks at work on the business which so vast an estate entails. Electric lamps, typewriters, and telephones prove that even backward Russia is progressing. A curious clicking sound, which is heard in this as in every office and shop throughout the country, is produced by the *stchott*, a sort of elementary calculating machine. It consists of a square wooden frame, with a row of metal rods across it, on each of which are a number of movable wooden discs. It is said that you can calculate with lightning rapidity and accuracy by means of the *stchott*.

The end room of the office is divided across the middle by a wooden railing, on one side of which a youthful clerk is taking notes on slips of paper, while on the other a small crowd of peasants, mostly women and children and old people, are standing huddled together, each in turn coming forward with a little speech. They seemed to be in the lowest stage of poverty and wretchedness, and they had, indeed, all come to ask for assistance of some kind. The majority were the wives and families of reservists who had been called out to serve at the front. Very demurely and humbly, and with sad smiles and deep prostrations, they set forth their tale in a sing-song tone, which was always more or less the same: "Alexiei Mikhailovich was summoned six months ago, and has joined the —th infantry regiment now in Manchuria; the last news of him was

[1] From the French word *comptoir*.

received three months ago, since then nothing more. Perhaps he is wounded, or dead, who knows? There is no one to work the field, there is no more money or corn left, and the children are hungry and must be fed." Such a description as this is true of hundreds of thousands of families throughout the length and breadth of Russia, for the shadow of the great struggle is dark upon the land. Prince Y—— had given orders that those families of reservists in the neighbourhood who were really in need should receive assistance, and several clerks were busy examining and verifying the various petitions. Other peasants were asking for help for other reasons — illness, accidents, fire, or similar mischances. There was one strange-looking old man with long matted hair and yellow parchment-like face, his hands as black as coal from digging up beet-roots, a labour lasting several weeks, during which washing is strictly tabooed. As we go out other petitioners come to ask further favour of Baron M——, and there is much kow-towing and bowing to the ground.

Let us now have a look at the grounds and the farm buildings. The former have little that calls for attention. The bit of garden at the back of the house is not much cared for, as in Russia flowers do not flourish. There are some stables for the agent's horses and carriages, a tree nursery, some out-houses, and the farm. This consists of a very large square yard enclosed by wooden railings, and a number of sheds and low buildings. Here are the houses of

some of the sub-agents, and beyond some large cow-houses, and stabling for a considerable number of horses; for although the peasants all have their own ponies, there is a good deal of permanent work to do about the farm, for which additional ones are required. Russian peasants' horses are very small and ill-fed, and subject to frequent and disastrous epidemics. As usual, there are quantities of carts, among them one of a very curious shape, called a *linyeika*, consisting of a seat placed lengthways between four low wheels with a footboard on each side; it is drawn by a powerful, fast-trotting horse. *Linyeikas* are used by the farm agents when going the rounds of the estate. Driving is a much more favourite means of locomotion in Russia than riding, and the ideal Russian horse is the large black trotter of the Orloff breed. It is only among the Cossacks and the Tartars of the Crimea that riding is at all general. Among the farm buildings are dormitories for the peasants who come to work on the home farm. These are large bare rooms, some furnished only with plank beds, others with one or two long tables, benches, and ovens, serving as dining-rooms, similar to the barrack dwellings in the factories. Lodging and the use of the oven with fuel are given gratis as part of the labourer's wages. Besides the houses of the agents, and the dormitories, there are a number of *izbas*, or cottages, for peasants permanently employed on the farm. Other buildings contain large storerooms for provisions and the produce of the land, smithies, and repairing workshops; for the

estate is a little world in itself, and has to be largely self-supporting. The blacksmith usually does not get regular wages, but receives a house and a piece of land, and is provided with the iron for the horse-shoes and implements required on the estate. He is also allowed to work for the neighbouring peasants, who bring him the metal they want made up, and usually pay him for his trouble in kind. There is still a great deal of exchange and barter in Russian rural economy, and cash plays as yet a comparatively small part. Among the curiosities of the farmyard is a young wolf captured the previous winter, a mild, frightened creature, that falls lamentably short of one's ideal of the ferocious beasts that are supposed to haunt Russian forests.

After the farm the next object of inspection is the village. R——, like most other Russian estates, is not one uniform property, but is cut up and intersected by the land belonging to the peasants, or rather to the *mir*. Here on this estate the land is worked partly by the ex-domestic serfs and their children, who are likewise permanently employed, and partly by those members of the *mir* whose allotments are no longer capable of supporting them. The manner in which the work is organised is an instance of the love of co-operation common to the Russian people. A number of peasants form themselves into an *artel*, or society, and contract to undertake a certain piece of work on the estate, for which they receive a share of the proceeds in kind (one-third to one-half of the crops). The peasants bring

their own horses and implements, but receive the seed and manure; they are lodged, and occasionally even fed, by the landlord, while the work lasts.

We will now visit the village. Although the village community is now quite independent of the landlord, the villagers, especially those born in serfdom, have not yet realised the fact completely, and they still look upon him to some extent as their lord and master, and also as their protector who must help them in times of famine. Consequently he (or his agent) enjoys a position and influence but slightly inferior to what it was in the days when he was literally lord of all he surveyed. The village begins at the door of the manor. A broad open space extends in front of the house, surrounded by rows of small shops — the general store, the spirit monopoly shop, the shoemaker, tailor, cobbler, etc. These establishments are adorned with huge signboards (a green and yellow tablet in the case of the spirit shop), for the great majority of the peasants are illiterate. In the centre numbers of carts are collected, their horses unharnessed, and there are a few peasants squatting about to look after them. Towering above all the other buildings rises the great whitewashed church with its gilded domes glittering in the sunlight.

A road leads from this square across a little river into the village proper. In Russia, town and village do not quite correspond to the meaning of those words in other countries, for while there are "towns"

TYPES OF RUSSIAN WOMEN

of 10,000 inhabitants, there are "villages" of 20,000 or 30,000. This village of R—— has 10,000 inhabitants, and it covers an area such as would shelter two or three times that number in Western Europe. It consists of a few very long, wide, straggling streets and open spaces flanked by irregular rows of low, one-storied whitewashed cottages built of logs and roofed with thatch. They are separated from each other by spaces of wooden railing enclosing the yards with which each dwelling is provided. The yards are entered by broad gateways surmounted by pagoda-like roofs, of a type common throughout the East. The wells are also very Oriental-looking with their wooden well-heads and wooden lever-poles for drawing up the buckets. Timber plays a most important part in Russian life, the enormous majority of the houses both in town and country being of that material, whence the French writer's description of Russia as "*l'Europe en bois.*" A few peasants pass along the road, some of them following with carts; sheep, pigs, and dogs are wandering about aimlessly, and there are numbers of small and very dirty children at play. The general appearance of the village is quaint and not unattractive at a distance, and the white cottages impart a bright tone. Let us go into one of them. It is a little larger than most of its fellows and contains three rooms, two of which are occupied by a peasant family of six persons — four adults, a boy of fifteen, and a small child. One of the rooms is also the kitchen, and furnished with a large stove, sur-

rounded by benches which at night serve as beds. The only other furniture is a table and a few stools. Some kitchen utensils are scattered about the floor and the table, and the walls are plentifully adorned with brilliantly painted *ikons* (religious pictures). The rooms are lit by small windows hermetically sealed, and the atmosphere is certainly not of the purest. The third room is let to a lodger, a candidate for holy orders, who is assisting the local priest. This family has an allotment of about seventeen acres, for which £3 3s. has to be paid yearly in taxes, including the instalments for the endowment, but the latter will have been repaid in full in seven years' time. They also own three horses and two foals, a cow, a calf, three pigs, and four sheep. Round the house is a yard enclosed by a wooden fence and some sheds and stables. The peasants' food is more or less like that of the artisans, consisting chiefly of *kasha* (a sort of gruel), rye bread, and cabbage soup. The men are attired in red cotton shirts and jackets, and trousers enclosed either in high boots or in cloth leggings with sandals of vegetable fibre. The women also wear cotton materials and brightly coloured handkerchiefs. These light clothes are worn even in winter, for the *izbas* are then heated to a very high temperature, while for going out of doors thick yellow sheepskins are donned, a most effective protection against cold.

The other farms and the cottages scattered over many thousands of acres are all more or less alike,

and so are their inmates and their horses and carts and cattle. Here and there large threshing-machines, bearing the name of an English maker, are at work, and there are quite a number of iron ploughs, for the property is run on modern lines, and even some of the village communes, helped by the *zemstvos*, are beginning to adopt improvements. But save in a few Governments the use of modern appliances is quite an exception.

An important industry on this estate is the large beet-sugar factory, employing 300 hands. The sugar trade introduced from Germany has assumed large proportions in Russia during the last few years, and a great deal of land is devoted to the cultivation of the beet.[1] At the time of my visit the beet harvest was in full swing. A number of peasants were hard at work digging up the roots all over the estate. They slept in the fields in little sheds or tents erected for the purpose, so as to be near their work. They were earning up to a shilling a day plus their food. The roots are collected in large baskets, which are conveyed on carts to the mill. For miles around the roads were thronged with endless processions of heavily laden carts. The roots are emptied into pits in a large yard, then transferred into wooden crates to be weighed, and finally brought to the mill; they enter at one end as dirty lumps of black earth, and after a variety of complicated processes emerge at the other as unrefined sugar. The mill is fitted up

[1] The total output of refined sugar in 1895 was 684,721 tons from 865,862 acres; in 1902–3 it had risen to 1,180,293 tons (*Statesman's Year Book*, 1905).

with all the most modern machinery, and works day and night with double shifts for ten weeks. When once all the beet-roots of the year's harvest have been used up the works are closed for the rest of the year.

The village of R——, with its 10,000 inhabitants, at present has only one school. The story of Prince Y——'s fruitless attempt to open a second is characteristic of the way in which education is hampered in Russia. The Prince built the schoolhouse, furnished it, and added two extra classes to the ordinary elementary curriculum, one for carpentering and one for basket-making, providing them with the necessary fittings. Then he offered the school just as it stood to the Minister of Education. An inspector came to examine it and reported on it, but the bureaucrats of the department declared that with those two additional classes it was a technical rather than an elementary school, and whereas they were prepared to expend the 1,200 roubles a year, which was the sum assigned to elementary schools, a technical one would cost 15,000 roubles a year, and this they could not afford, so the offer was rejected. Prince Y—— then offered it to the Holy Synod, but that body declared that every Synodial school should have a well; this one was without that necessary adjunct, the construction of which would cost 600 roubles; the Synod, therefore, refused it. There remained the local *zemstvo*, but Prince Y—— happened to be on bad terms with that body, so he did not make any offer in that direction. Disgusted at the two refusals, he converted the building into a

convalescent home for wounded soldiers who had returned from the war. Thus R—— has to get along as best it may by means of its one school.

What has been the effect of the war on the peasantry? As far as I could judge, the direct effects had not been very remarkable, at all events as compared with those on the industrial classes. The condition of the peasants is mainly dependent on the harvest, on which the war has of course no influence. This year (1904) the crops had been moderate on the whole — good in the Centre, very good on the Volga, very bad in Poland and in the South-East, especially in Bessarabia. But, on the other hand, the commerce of agriculture was seriously hampered by the transport of troops. Even in ordinary years at harvest-time the resources of the railway companies are unequal to the task of coping with the immense consignments of grain which are sent from the interior Governments to the seaports. But now that such large numbers of cars are monopolised for military purposes the situation is even worse, and as late as the month of March, 1905, no less than 180,000 wagon-loads of grain were rotting in the stations, as there were no means of forwarding them to the coast. The immense number of peasants withdrawn from the labour of their fields to fight in Manchuria has, moreover, caused much hardship in a considerable section of the population, for although the families of the reservists have houses to live in, and in some cases are able to carry on the work of the farm, the great majority are forced to depend on

the charity of their richer neighbours, the pittance which they receive from the State being absolutely insufficient. The prospect of future mobilisations led to the authorities placing difficulties in the way of the annual migration of peasants from one part of Russia to another, and this has had the effect of lowering wages in the districts from whence these migrations were made, while in the districts dependent on hired labour from elsewhere it is difficult to cultivate the soil. Then of course it must be remembered how large a proportion of the peasants are partly dependent on industrial labour of one kind or another. They all find their earnings from such supplementary sources reduced, and this is for them a vital question, owing to the insufficiency of the income from their land.

This combination of circumstances has not been sufficient to arouse among the mass of the peasants a conscious feeling of opposition to the war, and still less of active and organised political hostility to the Government. The Tsar is still a divinity for the great mass of the *mujiks*, distant and difficult of access, but benevolent and all-powerful, who would heal their ills if only he knew of them; and they are far too ignorant to understand political questions. But, on the other hand, the hatred of the bureaucracy and the tax-collector, and to some extent of the landlord, is increasing, the propaganda of the revolutionists, especially of the Socialists, is beginning to make some headway among the peasants. Those who visit the towns come back with their heads full

of new ideas, and quite recently, in consequence of the strike disturbances, numbers of workmen have been sent back to their native villages. These men, deprived of their means of livelihood, embittered by the struggle, and filled with revolutionary feeling, form dangerous centres of propaganda among the *mujiks*, and the bureaucracy has thus adopted the suicidal policy of dispersing them among the very people in whom its last hope of salvation lies.

But more than all this the economic question is becoming increasingly urgent. I have shown how the peasant, save in a few favoured districts, is no longer supported by his land. Unless he can afford to buy or rent other land from the large proprietors he must work for others as a labourer or artisan on the most onerous terms; and even this resource, small as it is, is growing smaller still in consequence of the recent crisis and the war. When the harvest is good the *mujik* can just manage to rub along, but when it is bad — and it is bad in some part of Russia every year, while general famines occur every four or five years — he is utterly destitute. Although he has plenty of land as far as acreage goes, he has not sufficient capital to cultivate it properly, neither intellectual capital in the shape of education, nor material capital in the shape of implements. Moreover, when famines occur immense numbers of horses die (in 1891 over 1,000,000 died in ten Governments alone), and this deprives the peasants of the means of tilling the land for the next year. Conse-

quently the situation is getting worse every year. The war and the general state of unrest throughout the country lead many Russians to fear a peasant rising in the near, if not the immediate, future, which might take the form of a general attack on the nobility, the burning of their houses, and the seizing of their land. One hears of nobles' families hurrying into the towns or abroad from fear of disturbances. It is very difficult to express an opinion on the possibilities of the future, especially for a foreigner; but even educated Russians say that they do not really know what is going on in the *mujik's* mind.

On the constitutional question the peasants have as yet little to say. They are a vast, dumb, inert mass, with few thoughts beyond their land and their Church. By nature they are conservative, but it is doubtful whether their conservatism would take an active form in case of trouble. It is quite possible that the political problem and the struggle between Liberalism and bureaucratic reaction may be fought and won in the towns without the intervention of the peasantry. Then when it is over the peasant question will come up once more and requisition the efforts of all the ablest intellects in the country for its solution. Of course, peasant risings may take place as they have before since the days of Pugatcheff, but such occurrences, horrible as they might be, are not likely to prove sufficiently formidable to upset the Government of the day. For the present the political problem overshadows all others, and in

that the peasants have comparatively small influence. But until the conditions of the *mujiks* are radically altered and improved, Russia can never hope to be really peaceful or prosperous.

CHAPTER X

THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIA

THE resources of the Russian Empire are one of the most interesting economic problems of modern times, and are also a political question of vast importance. This huge Empire with its 140,000,000 inhabitants, its immense plains of great agricultural wealth, its mountain ranges teeming with minerals, comprising within its borders every variety of climate and vegetation, and populated by a great number of different races, should undoubtedly prove one of the chief factors in the world's economic development. Russia does unquestionably possess many of the chief elements of industrial and commercial as well as agricultural wealth — an unlimited supply of labour, valuable mines, and great waterways. But until very recent times she has been almost exclusively an agricultural country. Her few industries were of the most primitive character, carried on by peasants in their cottages during the long winter months and serving merely to supply the local need of the estate or the village. Under Peter the Great, when every department of Russian life received a new momentum and a new direction,

inspired by the Tsar's own energy and based on Western example, an attempt was made to establish industries on a large scale. The great difference between the industrial development of Russia and that of Western Europe is that, while the latter was more or less a natural growth arising from the real needs of the people, and was due to the activity of the intelligent middle classes, in Russia it was entirely artificial, introduced from above and by ukase, and carried out, at all events at first, in the absence of a *bourgeoisie*. Its primary object, moreover, was to provide for the military requirements of the Empire, and to render the State in this respect independent of foreign countries; the desire to free Russia from dependence on the foreign producer has ever since in one form or another been the mainspring of the Government's fiscal policy.

The earliest Russian industries were of two kinds, viz., the nobles' factories and the proprietary or State factories. The former were to some extent the outcome of the still older cottage industries, and were situated on the estates of the large landed proprietors and worked by means of forced labour. The serfs were turned on to work in the factory by order of their master when they were not required for field labour. They received food and shelter, but no pay; some landlords who were unable to establish factories of their own would hire out their serfs for industrial purposes to other landlords who had mills; the annual hire was about 25 roubles (£2 2s.) per head. The labour thus obtained was both cheap

and inefficient, the men were ill-treated and beaten on the slightest provocation, and the general results proved most unsatisfactory. But sometimes the serfs themselves set up small industries; these eventually developed into large factories, from which their founders derived great wealth; but being still the property of their master they were forced to pay him a sort of poll-tax, called *obrok*, for their partial freedom, and they were always liable to be recalled to the farm when it suited his convenience. Some of the richest manufacturers of Russia are descended from serfs, and still to some extent keep up the habits and simplicity of peasants. The act of emancipation proved the death-blow to the great majority of the nobles' factories, but a certain number of those founded by serfs continued to exist, while the cottage industries are still flourishing, and, indeed, in certain branches more than hold their own against the large mills.

The proprietary factories were the outcome of Peter the Great's military policy, for he desired to have a home supply of arms, ammunition, clothing, boots, and other stores for the army. Some of these establishments were worked directly by the Government, while others were conceded to private manufacturers, but always under Government supervision. The workmen were either serfs of the Crown, employed in the same way as the private serfs were on the nobles' factories, or serfs purchased by the State concessionaires for this purpose. Sometimes beggars and vagrants would be seized and impressed into

the mills. The results, however, were not successful even in this case, as the utter absence of technical skill and education on the part of the artisans was a fatal bar to progress, and Peter was obliged to obtain a large part of his supplies from abroad as before. The Tula arms factories were more successful, and they still survive to this day. The smallness of the people's needs prevented industry from making any real progress, and the system of serfage made it impossible to obtain an adequate supply of skilled labour.

But during the XIX. century, with the modern ideas which began to penetrate into Russia in the reign of Alexander I., industry assumed a more important development, in which foreign capital, foreign management, and to some extent even foreign labour played a part. The Crimean War was a set-back to economic improvement, but its consequences — the liberation of the serfs and the other reforms carried out by Alexander II. — proved most beneficial, while the general progress of Russia, the discovery of new mineral areas, and the increasing introduction of foreign capital contributed further to promote manufactures.

The liberation of the serfs produced two effects in this connection; in the first place it gave the peasants greater, though not absolute, freedom to devote themselves to industrial pursuits, especially in the case of the personal serfs who were not endowed with land; and, secondly, the nobles received compensation from the Government for the land from which

they had been expropriated, so that the former owners now found themselves with a considerable amount of funds at their disposal. It was thought that they would spend them on improving their remaining estates, but as a matter of fact those who did not squander it in amusements in St. Petersburg invested it in industrial undertakings from which they hoped to derive higher dividends than from agricultural improvements. Industrial progress then became more rapid, especially in certain branches such as textiles, which assumed a really vigorous life. But the ignorance of the people and the want of technical education constituted serious obstacles, and the fact that the great majority of the peasants were formed into village communities and endowed with land made it difficult for them to abandon their fields for the mills, even when they were willing to do so, which was by no means always the case. Poland, being nearer to the European frontier and in close contact with Germany, developed much more rapidly, so much so that at one time the Moscow manufacturers demanded a protective tariff against their Polish rivals.

Just as Peter the Great attempted to make Russia independent of the foreigner as far as concerned military supplies, his successors in the XIX. century determined to make her self-supporting altogether. The task was a gigantic one, but the Russian Government is in the habit of doing things on an immense scale, and was not appalled by its magnitude. Realising that the country was very rich in natural

resources, the Government believed that industries could be created then and there "by order of the Tsar." Three methods were relied upon to bring about this consummation, viz., protection, foreign capital and foreign brains, and education. Unfortunately, however, the first of these measures was regarded as the chief and most important, while the third was the most neglected. The result has been undoubtedly a great industrial development, but the movement has not been altogether a healthy one, and has suffered from some very severe setbacks, owing to the fact that it was imperfectly organised, and that the country was not yet ready for it. The outward signs of industrial progress have, indeed, been achieved, but a sound industrial organisation cannot be brought about save by a long tradition and a rational system of education. The Russian is often a good merchant; but although he is very versatile and exceptionally handy with his fingers, he is still ignorant and lacking in that organising ability which is absolutely necessary for industry, but cannot be provided to order. Above all, the country is still very poor, and although large in extent of square miles, it offers as yet a very restricted market. Credit plays far too large a part in Russia's economic life for sound conditions to prevail. It is quite usually given for six, nine, and twelve months, and sometimes on the flimsiest security.

Industrially, Russia is divided into five main areas or zones. The most important is the Central

or Moscow region, comprising the Governments of Moscow, Vladimir, Tver, Nijni Novgorod, and some districts of other neighbouring provinces. The industries of this part of the country are of a varied nature, including textiles, metallurgy, chemicals, breweries, sugar refineries, machinery, etc. Their development is due to the presence of the old capital with its teeming population, to the richness of the soil, to the great waterways (Volga, Oka, and Kama), and to the market provided by the Nijni fair. The St. Petersburg and Baltic Province zone likewise contains a number of miscellaneous industries, such as iron and steel works, textile mills, tobacco mills, wagon and locomotive works, arms factories, shipbuilding yards, etc.; they have arisen largely owing to the seaports whence foreign merchandise, machinery, and above all, English coal can be obtained at lower rates than in the interior, and also to the presence of an active and intelligent German and Finnish population. The industries of the South Russian zone (Governments of Ekaterinoslav, Kherson, Kharkoff, Taurid, and the Province of the Don Cossacks) are almost exclusively mining and metallurgical works, established to utilise the rich deposits of coal and iron. The Ural industries are also exclusively mineral, but it has no coal. Poland is, for its size, the most industrial province of the Empire, and contains various kinds of manufactures, of which the principal are textiles, metallurgy, and tanneries; they arose in consequence of the coal deposits in the Dombroova basin, of the nearness of the German

and Austrian frontier, of the presence of a considerable German and Jewish population, and of the activity and intelligence of the Poles themselves. Finally, there is the Baku oil district, where a number of works for the extraction and preparation of petroleum in its various forms have been established. In all cases a large amount of foreign capital is invested in these undertakings.[1] The total industrial production of Russia is valued at something over 2,800,000,000 roubles (£210,000,000) per annum, which is considerably more than its agricultural produce, distributed as follows: Moscow *rayon*, 780,000,000 r.; St. Petersburg and the Baltic Provinces, 435,000,000 r.; Poland, 425,000,000 r.; South Russia, 300,000,000 r.; the Urals, 185,000,000 r.; the Caucasus, 130,000,000 r. To this we must add the gold industry, chiefly in Siberia, which produces annually about 80,000 to 98,000 lbs. This, of course, does not represent anything like the whole of Russia's potential wealth. Only a fraction of the mineral resources of Siberia and of the Caucasus have been developed, and even in European Russia there are large untouched deposits of coal and iron, while many other parts of the country which have hardly been explored at all probably contain other valuable sources of wealth.

The chief markets for the output of Russian indus-

[1] The Southern industries are largely financed by French and Belgian capital; those of Moscow by German and English money, although here Russians, too, have largely invested in them. The Polish works are partly financed by Germans, and those of St. Petersburg by foreigners of all nationalities. The Ural works are for the most part purely Russian.

try are European Russia, Asiatic Russia, and other Asiatic countries bordering on Russian territory, and the rest of Europe. The Russian market (European and Asiatic) for a long time to come is bound to be the most important, but it can only be maintained, at all events under present conditions, by means of protection. Even so, this market is, as I said before, a very restricted one, the Russian peasant being still wretchedly poor. As Baron von der Bruggen stated, of the 126,000,000 inhabitants of European Russia, only a few millions are able as well as willing to buy manufactured goods.[1] Even M. Witte, when pressed by the manufacturers to devise means to oblige the public to buy, admitted that the peasant could not, rather than would not, purchase the output of the industries. The large exports of grain which seem to indicate a great purchasing power on the part of the population simply mean that the peasant is selling the grain which he ought to be consuming himself to the foreigner to pay the taxes. The perpetually recurring famines are disastrous to industry as well as to agriculture, for if the peasant is starving there is so much less cotton cloth and iron brought into the country. Still the home market remains the most important, and it is carefully preserved for the native manufacturer by protection, and to some extent by Government orders. The markets of Western Europe, which absorb so large a share of Russia's exports of grain and other raw material, are of little value to its indus-

[1] E. von der Bruggen, *Das heutige Russland.*

tries, for Russian manufactures cannot compete in price and quality with those of more advanced countries. The Asiatic trade is much more promising. The requirements of Siberia and Russian Central Asia are largely supplied by Russian industry, and Russian expansion in the Far East has opened up new fields. In Persia, too, Russia has a large share of the trade on account of its geographical and other advantages, and there is a certain amount of exports to Turkey and China. But the Russian possessions, especially during the last few years while the Siberian railway was being built and other great public works carried out, has provided the Russian mills with very large orders.

The growth of Russian industry is best illustrated in that of its two most important branches, viz., textiles and metallurgy. The textile trades are the largest and most flourishing in Russia, and in them we find the characteristic blend of old Russian industrial traditions and modern scientific methods and machinery. Their output is estimated at just under 1,000,000,000 roubles per annum, which is about one-third of the total industrial production of the country; and they employ some 650,000 work people. They are undoubtedly the soundest and most solid branch of the country's industrial development. Their chief centres are the Moscow *rayon*, where they were first established, St. Petersburg and the Baltic Provinces, and Poland. The industry is the oldest in Russia, and has its beginning as early as the XVII. century, but for a long time

it was limited to the spinning and weaving of linen by hand-looms. The flax grown in the Northern forest region was worked up in the peasants' cottages or the nobles' factories. Later on cotton began to be imported from Central Asia, where, however, it was not grown on scientific principles, that country being still in a condition of native barbarism. The cotton goods produced in Russia could not compete with the superior fabrics of foreign mills which continued to have a large sale in the country. According to Professor von Schultze-Gävernitz, the three stages of the development of the textile trades in Russia are marked by the linen industry of Vladimir, worked by the peasants, especially by the various sects of heretics and dissenters, and to some extent by the nobles; the dyeworks of Ivanovo, which had begun as cottage industries but were afterwards modernised by means of machinery, and constitute the first attempt at industry on a large scale in Russia; and the Moscow spinning mills.[1]

For a time the cottage industries continued to hold their own, as they do to some extent to this day; but early in the century importation of cotton yarns from America began to assume large proportions. The importer of cotton was also a banker and a money-lender, and soon became a person of great wealth and influence in the business world. He alone was known to the bankers, merchants,

[1] Dr. Gerhart von Schultze-Gävernitz, *Volkswirtschaftliche Studien aus Russland*, Leipzig, 1899 (pp. 52–106). It is a most valuable work, to which I must express my indebtedness.

and manufacturers of Western Europe, so that he became practically master of the trade. But in 1822 the more highly protectionist tariff opened up the possibility of establishing the cotton industry in Russia itself, and the import of cotton yarns began to decline, while their manufacture in the country was established. Little by little the import firms erected cotton mills, and the import of raw cotton from Central Asia, America, and later from Egypt, increased very rapidly. This development is largely due in the first instance to the initiative of Ludwig Knoop, a German trained in a Lancashire cotton mill and settled in Russia as its representative — a characteristic instance of the medley of heterogeneous elements which make up Russian industrial life. He had come to Russia in 1839, and, at the request of M. Morozoff, a Moscow yarn importer, he fitted up a spinning mill with English machinery as an experimental speculation. The venture proved a success, and Knoop soon became a regular importer of English machinery and a promoter of industrial undertakings. At the end of his career he could look back on 122 spinning mills founded through his agency. He was the "cotton king" of Russia, and interested in a large number of firms; most of the largest cotton mills of to-day are due to his initiative. According to Von Schultze-Gävernitz, Knoop owed much of his success to his strong digestion and his good head, for he was able to keep good company with the Moscow merchants in the *traktirs*, drinking unlimited

champagne and *vodka* with them in the approved Russian style, but keeping his brain clear for business.

The cotton industry is now firmly established and fairly prosperous. Protected on the one hand by high tariff against foreign competition, and on the other answering to the genuine requirements of the people, it may rank as Russia's one industrial success. The bright colours and gaudy patterns of these cheap fabrics appeal both to the Russian *mujik* and to the more primitive peoples of Russia's Asiatic possessions. The scarlet shirt of the peasant is a characteristic feature of the Russian landscape in summer, and even in winter, I have said before, it is largely worn indoors. In Asiatic Russia the cheaper cotton prints have displaced the more expensive linen or silk garments. Russia has the additional advantage of being able to produce a large part of the raw material for this industry within her own dominions. In Central Asia more scientific methods of cotton growing have been introduced, and irrigation is increasing the area under cultivation. It is the ambition of the Government to render the country independent of American foreign cotton, but Central Asia is not yet capable of meeting anything like all the needs of the industry. The total requirements are about 22,000,000 poods per annum, whereas Central Asia and the Caucasus produce less than 6,000,000 poods, and it is not likely that this amount can be appreciably increased. Moreover, the quality of Asiatic cotton is very in-

ferior to that of America or Egypt, and the higher numbers (above 40) cannot be produced at all; the seed too has to be renewed much more frequently than in other countries. The means of transport are very imperfect, and while the Moscow manufacturer can count on the delivery of his consignments of American or Egyptian cotton within a reasonable margin of time, in the case of those from Central Asia there is much less punctuality. The new Orenburg-Tashkent line will doubtless increase the facilities of transit; but the peculiar Oriental methods of Asiatic merchants make business very difficult, and some Russian manufacturers have now established their own cotton plantations. Cotton-growing has met with some success in that most fertile of Russian provinces, the Caucasus, and much is hoped from the development of this new field. But for many years to come, and for all the better qualities of cottons, Russia must be chiefly dependent on foreign countries.

In spite of its successes even the textile industry cannot be said to be wholly founded on a sound basis. Some of the mills are genuinely successful, and those which are run economically and on modern lines will doubtless continue to prosper. But the same cannot be said of the industry as a whole. Other firms are living on their past, and some are even said to pay their dividends out of reserves accumulated in more prosperous times. This state of things is due to a variety of causes, of which one of the most important is the cost of production, which,

however, applies to all industries in general, for although wages are low it does not follow that labour is cheap. Then railway communications are very inadequate, the average rate of speed for goods being about two versts an hour, and blocks on the lines are of very frequent occurrence. Moreover, there is a heavy duty on all machinery, and although cotton machinery cannot be produced in Russia and is absolutely necessary for this great national industry, it is taxed just as heavily as the rest, so that its price in Russia comes to three times as much as it is in England. Lastly, the textile trades, like all the other branches of Russian industry, have been suffering from the fever of over-production and wild speculation, and the mills of Moscow, Vladimir, Tver, and Lodz have been turning out a much larger quantity of goods than there was any demand for.

In the metallurgical trades the development has been much more rapid and the collapse more startling than in any other industry, and it is here that the peculiarities of Russia's industrial system and fiscal policy have been most conspicuous, for these are the industries which the Imperial Government was most anxious to develop. For some centuries the mineral deposits of the Urals had been well known and exploited. That range of mountains extending from the North to the South of Russia, and dividing Europe from Asia, is rich in almost every kind of mineral, but especially in iron ore. Until the last quarter of a century the Ural mines

supplied Russia with all the metal she required save a small quantity which was imported from abroad, and even to-day the Urals hold the second place among the country's mineral-producing centres (about 1,370,000 tons per annum). The industry, however, is worked on primitive lines, with no other fuel than timber, and under purely Russian conditions. Even modern machinery is not largely employed, and only a small amount of foreign capital is invested in it. At the same time the manufacture of certain kinds of iron goods has reached a very high degree of perfection.

But in the sixties discoveries of iron ore were made in the South of Russia, and by a fortunate, though not unusual, combination coal deposits were found in the same area, the former chiefly in the Krivoi Rog district, the latter in the Donietz basin (Governments of Ekaterinoslav, Kherson, and the Taurid, and the Province of the Don Cossacks). The coal beds were enormous, and the Government was most anxious to develop the industry, for here at last there seemed to be a chance of making Russia independent of foreign countries in the production of iron and steel, as well as of exploiting a new and valuable source of wealth for the people. The first person to exploit the South Russian iron and coal beds was an English prospector named John Hughes, who in 1871 established a small foundry near Bakhmut, in the east of the Ekaterinoslav Government. The venture proved most successful, and it is now the largest iron and

steel mill in the Empire. This success attracted other iron-masters, who set up many similiar works in the same part of the country. The great deficiency was capital, and although the emancipation of the serfs had supplied the nobles with a certain amount of ready money which they invested in industries, it was not nearly enough for the purpose. Consequently the Government made every effort to attract foreign capital into Russia. M. Vishniegradsky, the Minister of Finance, inaugurated this policy, but it was left to his successor, M. Witte, to carry it out most thoroughly. The Franco-Russian Alliance was ingeniously exploited for the same purpose, and at a time when the French investor was gushing over *la nation amie et alliée*, on the one hand, and on the other was becoming nervous about the internal conditions of his own country, then full of revolutions and rumours of revolutions, it was not difficult to induce him to put his money into what seemed a most promising field of industry. In a speech delivered in March, 1899, M. Witte declared, that as there was little capital available in Russia itself, "we must make use of the abundant and cheap foreign capital; by this means the painful sojourn in the school is shortened, and the school itself is improved by the introduction of a broader state of technical knowledge." Protection was carried to extreme lengths with the tariff of 1891, and favours of all sorts were showered upon industrial undertakings. Belgian, French, German, and even British capital poured into the country, especially

into the Southern metallurgical area. The building of the Siberian and other railways called for large orders for rails, wagons, locomotives, and other iron and steel goods, while the development of Siberia and Russian expansion in the Far East, where new towns were springing up like mushrooms, further increased the demand. To meet it company after company was floated, iron and steel works could not be set up fast enough, and the metallurgical trades seemed to be bursting with prosperity. The Government and the private banks vied with each other in recklessly advancing money for industrial purposes. Industrial production rose from 541,000,000 roubles per annum in 1877 to 2,816,000,000 roubles in 1897. Russia thus came to occupy the fourth place among iron-producing countries of the world.

But together with this great industrial development all the less desirable features of modern finance came to the front — bubble companies, company promoters and Stock Exchange speculators of doubtful character, swindlers of all kinds and nationalities, for whom Russia became a veritable happy hunting-ground. Then while some concerns were grossly over-capitalised, others were absurdly under-capitalised. Thus of a nominal capital of nearly 1,500,000,000 roubles invested in 927 limited companies, there was a working capital of only 600,000,000 roubles. Numbers of large establishments were founded with no other object than that of providing means for Bourse speculations, while many others

existed solely to fulfil Government orders. Many of the foreign manufacturers had no knowledge of local conditions and requirements, and set up mills on plans designed in France or Belgium. The commercial banks participated directly in Bourse operations and industrial concerns, in the rise of new share companies, in the distribution and realisation of shares, etc., without much regard to the reliability of the undertakings.[1] Here, too, the want of skilled artisans made itself felt, and the *mujik*, although versatile and ready to learn, is colossally ignorant, and needs to be guided like a little child. Finally about 1897 a crisis in the Russian industry began, which culminated in the year 1899. The Government orders began to diminish, and the State Bank to be more careful in advancing money. Numbers of firms found that without Government orders Othello's occupation was gone, for the ordinary market could not absorb more than a small part of their output; for although iron and steel goods were urgently required, the cost of production and the tariffs kept prices so high that the peasants could not afford to buy them. Among the remedies suggested, it was actually proposed at a congress of manufacturers that the Government should force the peasants to substitute iron roofs for their cottages in the place of thatch. Firm after firm suspended its activity and became bankrupt, and all had to reduce their production very consider-

[1] *Mineral and Metallurgical Industries of Russia*, Foreign Office Report, by Henry Cooke, 1901.

ably and dismiss numbers of workmen. Among the most remarkable failures were those of Messrs. Mamontoff, of the Phœnix Works, and of the Devise Company. The most important of Mamontoff's undertakings was the Archangel railway, an utterly unremunerative concern, which had given rise to some truly astonishing swindles and irregularities. To quote one small item, the sum of 17,000 roubles was charged for a single journey of five persons from St. Petersburg to Moscow! The Mamontoff failure involved that of many other companies. The Stal Company, founded by a St. Petersburg bank, also failed; the share capital of 7,400,000 roubles was all swallowed up, and of the imposing works and blast furnaces which were reported to have been well in progress, nothing was doing save a small furnace producing 200,000 poods of iron per annum. In the Kertch Steel Works 21,000,000 roubles belonging to French investors all disappeared. Many undertakings which had been showing splendid dividends proved on examination to have been really earning no profits at all, having merely paid the interest out of new issues of shares.

By the end of 1899 the crisis was in full swing, and shares of all kinds fell rapidly. Concerns which had been built up on a basis of high prices could not adapt themselves to altered conditions, and a large number of workmen were dismissed. The following figures showing the decline in the price of certain shares may be instructive:

	1896	1900	1901
Alexandrovsky	295	64	20
Briansk	508	225	147
Putiloff [1]	120	81	50
Sornovo	210	55	74½
Donietz-Yurieff	350	90	47
Baltic Wagon Works	2,165	1,025	900
Gleboff	135	3	0
Phœnix	335	50	45

In 1900 over 400 factories dismissed all hands and closed their works, 734,000,000 roubles' worth of shares paid less than 2½ per cent., 17 large foreign companies paid no dividends at all, and in the Donietz valley 21 blast furnaces out of 57 were shut down. Of the 494,306,000 roubles' worth of Belgian capital invested in Russia, 265,686,000 paid an average dividend of 2.7 per cent., while of the remainder a larger part was absolutely lost.[2]

The crisis naturally alarmed foreign capitalists and disgusted even the French allies, who began to feel that they had been induced to invest their money in Russia on false pretences. Various remedies were suggested and attempted to cope with this state of affairs, the general cry was for Government assistance in the shape of further orders, export bounties on metal goods, and the limitation of Government contract to Russian firms. The Government in many cases took over undertakings which were in difficulties, and advanced loans on easy terms to

[1] Since taken over by the Government.

[2] For further details see Mr. Cooke's report *passim;* also von der Bruggen's *Das heutige Russland,* ch. iv.

others. It has, therefore, become the owner of a very large number of iron and steel and other industrial works, and it is not only the starter and promoter of manufactures, but their chief consumer. But it was no longer in a position to continue in this course indefinitely. Other claims, especially those of a military nature, were more pressing, and public works could not be inaugurated simply to maintain unstable industries. As it was, far too much had already been done in this direction, and the Government was burdened with a number of useless and unprofitable undertakings. In its mania for protection it had spent nearly 100,000,000 roubles more on rails made in Russia than would have been necessary had the orders been placed in England, and a large part of the goods supplied were of such inferior quality that another 100,000,000 roubles had to be spent on new rails to replace the old ones which were already worn out. Of course, in the case of growing industries the Government might be justified in a certain measure of protection, but it should at least have insisted on obtaining goods of sound quality.

The real cause of these troubles lies in the exaggerated speed with which it was attempted to establish these industries. Just as it has not proved possible to convert Russia into a civilised nation by Imperial ukase, it has also proved impossible to make of it an industrial country all of a sudden. In this both the Government and the people, not to mention the foreign capitalists and investors, were in error.

Russia is a land of great, of tremendous, possibilities, and it is destined to occupy a high place among the industrial nations of the world; but the development must come gradually, and in correspondence with the slowly growing needs of the people. "The future," as Mr. Henry Cooke points out, in the admirable report referred to above, "with such assets to realise, cannot but be of the most promising. But it is being more and more fully recognised in Russia itself that the methods at present in vogue stand in need of considerable modification, that the speed has been too far and too artificially forced, and that a slower, more natural, and self-reliant system would be more in accordance with the special economic conditions of the country generally, and of the metallurgical industries in particular." Russia is still at bottom a semi-Asiatic and semi-mediæval state; only a fraction of the population is even partially educated, while the enormous mass is wretchedly poor. To promote industry is the right and the duty of the Government, but to force it by all the resources of a plus-quam-paternal fiscalism, before the country is prepared to assimilate it, is to widen the already vast gap between the Europeanised upper classes and the barbarous *mujiks*, and at the same time to lead to the economic disasters and upheavals which we have been contemplating. In a subsequent chapter I shall show how this economic unpreparedness has resulted in a further crisis on the outbreak of the war, for although the latter would in any case have brought about a certain dis-

location of the country's trade, the situation would not have been so serious if the economic position had been built up on more solid foundations.

A peculiar feature of Russian trade is the very large and influential foreign element connected with it. The first initiators of foreign enterprise in Russia were Englishmen, of whom a certain number visited the country for trading purposes at the time of Ivan the Terrible. Willoughby, Chancellor, Jerome Horsey, and Anthony Jenkinson were among the earliest pioneers of Anglo-Russian relations, both commercial and political; and in the XVII. century there were regular English trading colonies at Moscow and Archangel, whose members received exceptionally favourable treatment at the hands of the Russian Tsars. Descendants of these early settlers are still found in Russia, together with those of the Scotch soldiers of fortune who came over at the time of Peter the Great, although most of them have become completely Russified even as to their surnames. The English merchants founded many trades in Moscow, and opened the first drug store.

Subsequently the Germans began to invade Russia, and in the XVIII. century they were almost the only merchants. The pure Russians had but little business aptitude, and were easily ousted by the more enterprising Teuton or the Jew. In time, however, they too learned to become traders and shop-keepers, and to this day the Moscow merchants form one of the most characteristic classes

of Russian society. But in industry the foreigner still largely holds his own, for although the Muscovite is anything but stupid, he does not seem capable of organising a complicated undertaking, while the system of education, though theoretically excellent, is very deficient from a practical point of view. The Russian, moreover, does not like beginning at the beginning, and going through a course of manual labour in a mill as an Englishman, a German, or an American would have to do. He regards such a proceeding as both undignified and useless. I have shown how the industries were first started in the peasants' cottages and in the nobles' factories. The former indeed still survive and actually compete with the regular factories, especially in such goods as furniture and wooden implements of all kinds (spoons, bowls, platters, etc.), certain metal goods which are largely manufactured in the cottage forges of the Government of Tula, and a variety of other objects in daily use, such as pottery, linen cloth, etc. But as soon as large industries on modern lines fitted up with complicated machinery in which technical skill was necessary were introduced, the absence of trained men led to the importation of large numbers of foreigners as managers, engineers, clerks, foremen, and even common workmen. I have said how Knoop was the father of the Russian cotton industry, which has remained very largely English in character. Many of the managers, engineers, and foremen are still Englishmen or Scotchmen; it has been noticed

that the prosperity of the mills is largely bound up with the employment of foreigners, and that when the latter are dismissed by chauvinistic Russian owners who wish to employ natives in their place the undertakings in question become less flourishing. I was told of one cotton mill in the Baltic Provinces, of which the staff consisted of a Scotch manager with three assistants, also foreigners. The proprietors, for patriotic reason, chose to get rid of the Scotchmen and appointed a Russian, who had been professor in a St. Petersburg technical college, in his place. Within three months he had collected a staff of twenty-eight assistants around him, all of them Russians, and the business was declining rapidly. Finally the foreigners had to be recalled. The big cotton mills at Narva, perhaps the largest in the world (they have 400,000 spindles and 2,000 looms), are, in the words of Professor von Schultze-Gävernitz, "a piece of England on Russian soil."

It is not only in the cotton trades that foreigners are largely employed. The silk industry at Moscow is French in character, the South Russian iron and steel industries are for the most part French and Belgian, although there, too, there are a good many Englishmen, as at the Yuzovo works, which are entirely owned and managed by Englishmen. Everywhere, in every branch of industry, quantities of Germans are found, and they form, indeed, the most numerous foreign element. Some are descended from the old German colonies established in Russia by Catherine II. on the Volga and in the

South of Russia; others are settlers who have come into the towns more recently, to make their fortunes, either on their own account or on the invitation of local business men. During the middle of the XIX. century there was a regular German invasion, and Germans were to be found in every walk of life, not only in business, but even in the Government service. In Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ekaterinoslav, Kharkoff, Warsaw, Lodz, Odessa, and, in fact, in every large Russian town, there are numbers of foreign residents, mostly German, save in the Southern iron districts where the French and the Belgians are preponderant. The whole character of Russian industry is foreign, and in business circles one often hears nothing but German spoken.

Russian industry is also largely in the hands of Russian subjects who are not of Russian race, such as natives of the Baltic Provinces, Poles, Finns, Armenians, Greeks, and Jews. These various nationalities all display greater business aptitude than the pure Russians, and although subjects of the Tsar they are foreigners in character, in language, in religion, and often even in sentiments. There is little doubt that if the Government treated them on an equal footing with the Russians the latter would soon be ousted from an even larger share of business than is at present the case.

What the amount of foreign capital in Russia really is, it is impossible to say. Between 1889 and 1899 no less than 78 new foreign companies were formed with a capital of 126,587,000 roubles, and in

the latter year the interest on foreign money invested in Russia (according to M. Schwanenbach) amounted to 24,000,000 roubles. This of course represents a much larger capital than would appear, for a great deal of money invested but not bearing interest must be accounted for; more than half the foreign capital in Russia is invested in mines, and forms a quarter of the whole mining industry of the country. Other foreign investments are metallurgy, engineering works, public enterprises such as trams and electric light in the towns, the extraction of naphtha, etc., while Russian capital is directed more particularly to the textile trades, foodstuffs, the manufacture of sugar which is closed to foreign companies, and to purely commercial undertakings. Besides the foreign capital invested in foreign companies, which, as I have said already, amount to 20 per cent. of the total share capital, there is an immense amount of foreign money in Russian companies and in private enterprises of all kinds. It is said that French capital alone amounts to something like 14,000,000,000 roubles, of which the larger part however is sunk in Government securities, and although this figure is probably much exaggerated, there is no doubt that the amount is very large indeed. It has been generally remarked that English capital is on the whole invested in the sounder concerns, whereas the French and, above all, the Belgians have plunged into the wilder and more uncertain undertakings, and have consequently come to grief to a much greater extent.

The introduction of so much foreign capital has undoubtedly helped to develop Russia in every direction, but it cannot be contended that the wild fever of speculation of foreign investors and company promoters and the consequent crisis and collapse have been anything but unmitigated calamities. The Russian Government, however, by painting exaggeratedly glowing pictures of the country's possibilities in their official publications, have largely themselves to thank for this state of things, which has not only shaken the country's credit, but also tended to embitter the relations between the foreigners and Russians. It is a remarkable fact that foreigners living in the country are on the whole in very little sympathy with the natives. The French in particular are extremely bitter against the Russians, whom they accuse of having attracted French capital into the country on false pretences; among the French residents in Russia one hears very little but abuse and contempt for *la nation amie et alliée*. Foreigners in general complain of the low standard of commercial morality in Russia, and declare that wherever Russians obtain a predominant influence in any business, confusion, extravagance, and shady financial transactions are the inevitable result. On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that Russian investments, when successful, bring in much larger dividends than those in the more settled countries of the West, and that foreigners who adapt themselves to local conditions often succeed in making large fortunes very rapidly.

I do not mean to imply that Russians are incapable of developing industrial capacity; especially among the younger generation there are many men who combine the highest technical knowledge with wide practical experience, and who succeed admirably. But as yet they are very few, and at present it is almost impossible to find any important industry which is run entirely by Russians; there is always the Scotch manager, the German secretary, or some other foreigner who is really the moving spirit, and it will be long before the country can emancipate itself from foreign brains, as well as from foreign imports and foreign capital. For what is needed above all is education.

CHAPTER XI

THE RUSSIAN WORKING CLASSES

THE development of industry in Russia has led to the formation of a new class which is destined to play an important part in the future of the country, both political and economic. It was the boast of the Moscow Slavophils, the party that idealised everything Russian and regarded all Western institutions with repugnance, that Russia had no proletariat. With the emancipation of the serfs every peasant was endowed with enough land to live upon, while industrial labour would, in their opinion, be carried on by the peasants in winter only, when there was nothing to do in the fields, merely as an additional source of income. Thus Russia, privileged above all other nations, was to go on leading her patriarchal existence, reaping all the advantages of modern civilisation without suffering from any of its attendant evils, such as the proletariat, the factory system, etc.

The course of events, however, has not borne out these rosy prognostications, and the Empire is now faced by a number of very serious social problems. The old and primitive conditions of existence continue, with all their disadvantages and obstacles to

progress, while many of the evils of modern life are felt just as acutely in Russia as elsewhere. A large number of the Russian factory artisans are still half peasants, but this condition on the whole works to their detriment rather than to their advantage. Before the era of industrialism Russia had a very small town population, and to this day it does not form more than 15 or 16 per cent. of the total. It consisted of nobles, merchants, a few professional men, and the class called *mieshtchan*[1] or small tradesmen and artisans, who formed the bulk of the permanent town dwellers. There was no wealthy, influential, and corporate *bourgeoisie*, such as that which developed the industries and the civic life of Western Europe. The first Russian industries did not even grow up in the towns at all, but, as I have shown, on the large country estates, and were worked by forced peasant labour. At first the factories served for local needs only, but later they increased in importance and formed a considerable source of income for the landlords. Labour was supplied by the serfs, who of course received no pay, and was therefore cheap. The landlord simply turned on his men to work on the farm or in the mill, just as was most convenient to him at the moment. To the peasant, work in the factory was regarded with horror, and feared not less than military service which the master was entitled to inflict on him as a punishment. Later the peasants themselves started industries of their own, sometimes in their cottages and sometimes in the

[1] Singular, *mieshtchanin.*

towns; but if they wished to absent themselves they had to obtain permission from their master to whom they paid, as I showed in a previous chapter, the *obrok* tax, which often was a very large sum. The landlord could always recall them if he wished. When the serfs were emancipated the landlord of course could no longer force them to work for him, but had to pay them wages. Even then the industries continued to some extent to be carried on in the rural districts, and to this day there are many large factories far from any town, where colonies of workmen are housed, fed, educated, doctored, amused, brought into the world, married, and buried on the premises. At first these artisans were all peasants, who worked half the year in the fields and the rest in the mill.

But with the development of Russia, the growth of the towns, and the building of railways, the question of distribution assumed increasing importance and most of the industries tended to centre more and more round the large cities, such as St. Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw, etc. Even there, however, the peasant element was and still is very numerous. Every autumn when field labour is at an end, crowds of peasants wrapped up in rough sheepskin coats fill the third-class railway carriages, or are seen trudging along the muddy roads towards the great towns in search of work. The various groups form themselves into *artels* or co-operative labour partnerships, according to the nature of their work, and each *artel* elects its *starosta* or elder. On reach-

ing their destination, they repair to a tea-house, while the *starosta* goes round in search of work. He is authorised to contract for the whole group, for six months or longer. He receives the pay for all, and distributes it among the members of the *artel* according to the amount of work done by each, minus a commission for himself. When the contract has been fulfilled, the peasant-artisans return to their farms for the summer. The next winter they come back to the mill, though not necessarily to the same one, nor even to the same kind of work. The same man may be attending to cotton spindles one year, to silk looms the next, and be employed in a sugar refinery the third, with intervals of agricultural labour in between. This naturally does not tend to industrial perfection, and, in spite of the Russian *mujik's* skill and versatility, he can under these conditions become neither a good peasant nor a good workman.

Such a state of things is largely due to the peasant laws of Russia. When the peasants were serfs, they could go into town only when their masters found it convenient. With the emancipation a large proportion of them were endowed with land; but since 1861 they have greatly increased in numbers, while the land of the endowment has remained unchanged.[1] Consequently the product of the fields is becoming less and less sufficient for the needs of

[1] In 1858 the population of Russia was calculated at 74,000,000; at the last census in 1897 it was 129,000,000. It is now estimated at 143,000,000. The increase is, of course, in part accounted for by the extensions of territory.

the inhabitants, and an ever-increasing number is driven to seek work in the factories, at all events for part of the year. The peasants, however, have to pay taxes for their land, even when it no longer supports them; if they do not work their own allotments themselves some member of their family must do so, or a substitute must be paid for. Moreover the *mujik* has no natural love for factory work, which he looks upon as only a temporary expedient. When he goes to the mill he usually leaves his family behind, and constantly lives in the hope of getting back as soon as he has saved up enough to carry him on until the next year's harvest.

But the new industrial movement is rendering the continuance of this system impossible. Besides the original town population, there are the numerous ex-domestic serfs, who were not endowed with land, and their descendants, and those whom the land has ceased to support. Thus every year those who are wholly or almost wholly dependent on industry is increasing. Moreover, under modern conditions, and the adoption of expensive machinery, factory labour cannot be suspended for several months at a time without serious loss, and permanent artisans are more and more necessary. Mill owners spare no effort to retain the same staff, and indeed they pay higher wages in summer than in winter. The temporary nature of factory labour has many inconveniences from all points of view. The employer has no personal interest in the welfare of his employees and merely tries to get as much work out of them

as he can, knowing that he will obtain a fresh lot next year. The artisan on his side has no interest in the success of the mill, because the next year he will be working elsewhere. Personal sympathy between employer and employed can hardly grow up. In Moscow, which is the centre of all things Russian, and in Eastern provinces, these peasant-artisans are still very numerous; but in St. Petersburg, in the South Russian mining and metallurgical area, and, above all, in Poland, where the system of village communes does not obtain, the permanent artisans who have lost all ties with the land are becoming the prevailing element, and it is not rare to find instances of artisan families having been employed for two or three generations in the same establishment. Even when the artisan is still partly attached to the land it may be that he only returns to it for two or three weeks at harvest time.

Let us now examine the conditions under which factory labour in Russia is carried on. A characteristic feature of factory life is the barrack system. In the days when industry was carried on chiefly in the rural districts, and most of the artisans came from distant parts of the country, the mill owner was practically obliged to house them, and the custom still obtains in a great many establishments, for even in the towns ordinary lodgings are none too plentiful, and urban communications are bad. Huge buildings rise up around the factories, divided up into a series of dormitories, each containing from twenty to fifty working men or women. Plank

beds are provided by the employer, but the artisans bring their own bedding if they have any. One sees long rows of these boards covered with dirty but brightly coloured quilts and blankets, the walls adorned with numerous *ikons* or religious pictures, crude and grotesque in design, but brilliant in colour; before many of them lamps are kept burning day and night. No room in a Russian house is considered habitable unless plentifully provided with *ikons*; even the workshops are thus sanctified, for religion plays a large part in factory life, the *mujik* being the most superstitious of mortals. As a German writer stated, in Russia "*ikons* take the place of the portraits of Marx and Lassalle with which the German workmen adorn their dwellings, and of the Trade Union emblems of the British artisans." At each end of the dormitory there are long tables where the artisans prepare their tea in large glittering *samovars*. The appearance of these apartments is indescribably squalid and sordid, and the atmosphere is overpowering, for the Russian is not cleanly in his personal habits — the value of his weekly bath is largely discounted by the fact that he dons his same rarely changed underlinen again after the ablution; he has a strong objection to open windows, and in winter a very high temperature is maintained. In most cases the dirt and the vermin are indescribable, but I have seen a few establishments, such as Messrs. Giraud's silk-spinning mills at Moscow, where much better conditions prevail.

In many of the larger factories, in addition to the dormitories, there are a certain number of separate rooms, and even sets of two or three rooms for single families. Life is of course more tolerable in these apartments, although even here the conditions are such as would be regarded as almost impossible by English or American artisans. There is no legal limit to overcrowding, save where the employers themselves are better than the law, and impose such limits. The average Russian has little idea of comfort, beyond warmth and a supply of *ikons*, and he has no notion of tidiness. This is true even in the higher walks of life, where very odd domestic arrangements prevail, such as the very general absence of servants' rooms. I noticed a considerable improvement in the quarters of workmen of non-Russian race, such as Germans, Letts, Finns, and even Poles. Workmen's cottages on the English plan are very little known, but they exist on the New Russia Company's works at Yuzovo (Government of Ekaterinoslav), on Messrs. Morozoff's works at Tver, and near Moscow, and in a few other establishments.

Those at Yuzovo are altogether superior, and approach more nearly to artisan dwellings of Western Europe than anything I have seen in Russia.

Workmen who are housed in dormitories pay no rent, but those who occupy whole rooms or more have to pay for them. At St. Petersburg the average charge is about 9 roubles per month per room, which is very high; elsewhere it is somewhat less, and at Yuzovo it is as low as 2 roubles. Sometimes

even this superior accommodation is given gratis as an addition to wages, or as a reward for good and long service. Employers usually provide fuel and the use of the kitchen and dining rooms free of charge.

In the best managed works there are also hospitals, *crêches*, recreation and reading rooms, schools, and kindergartens. The school question is a most important one, and good education a crying need. Hitherto the authorities have systematically discouraged education, rightly believing that ignorance is the best bulwark of autocracy. Some mill-owners do their best to provide education for the children of their employees, with a view to training them for factory life; but even where they pay all expenses they have many obstacles to fight against, and their efforts are not viewed with favour. Still, such as they are, these factory-owned schools are generally better than those of the State or of the Holy Synod.

Where the employer does not lodge his work people, and this is done only in a certain number of factories, especially in the east of Russia, and outside the large towns,[1] the artisans have to find their own quarters in the common lodging-houses. There are no regular working-men's dwellings outside the mills, no model tenements, no Rowton houses, no systematic schemes for housing the poor, except the

[1] In the Government of Moscow, exclusive of the city, 57 per cent. of the factory hands are lodged in the mills themselves; in the Government of Vladimir, including that town, 42 per cent.; in Western Russia the proportion is only 15 per cent. and in Poland 10 or 11 per cent.

wretched doss-houses such as those described in Maxim Gorky's play, "A Night's Shelter," which are, however, only made use of as a last resort of hopeless despair. The tenements where even the more respectable poor live are noisome insanitary buildings, where the inmates are crowded together fifteen to twenty in a room; the corners of rooms are let separately, and the London slum story of the five families dwelling in one room, one in each corner and the fifth in the centre, who got on very amicably together until one of them took in a lodger, would hardly be an exaggeration in any large Russian town. Sometimes the attics and basements of quite good houses are let to the poorest of the poor. Rents are higher than in the lodgings provided by factory owners, and the accommodation much worse. Of course the better paid skilled workmen can afford more decent dwellings; but in the mass, as even Russian official publications recognise, the artisans are vilely housed. In the best factory lodgings the majority have barely 9.7 cubic metres per head, and in others and in most private lodgings the space is often no more than 2.4 to 4.8 per head. It may be said that their conditions are no worse than those to which they are accustomed from their earliest youth; this is true to some extent, but rural labour provides a certain antidote against insanitary surroundings; and, in any case, if the cottage is unhealthy, there is open air round it, whereas the town dwellers are cooped up in their filthy dens for months and years. Moreover, the artisans

are becoming much more civilised than the peasants, and have acquired increasing needs.

This question of lodging is a very important one from many points of view. Some reformers propose to solve it by the indefinite extension and improvement of the system of factory lodging-houses and cottages. But others, especially those of Socialist tendencies, see in this method a dangerous dependence of the artisans on the good favour of their employer, who by threatening expulsion can force them to accept what conditions he chooses to impose. There is some truth in this contention, for the provision of cottages is apt to degenerate into a form of the truck system, or payment of wages in kind. But in the present conditions of Russia this method is bound to continue, until there is some proper housing organisation apart from and outside the factory.

Certain firms feed as well as house their employees, either by distributing rations, or by establishing food stores on the premises. In theory the method is a good one, as employers can purchase provisions wholesale for large bodies of men at lower prices than the men would pay individually. But in practice it led to many abuses, some firms actually depending on the sale of food to their workmen for their sole profits. Now both the food and the prices are subject to a strict Government supervision; but there are still many irregularities. Although the work people cannot be forced to purchase their provisions from the factory store, this

establishment often had a practical monopoly of the supply, as there may be no other eating-house in the neighbourhood; and even if most employers make no profit out of it, they often farm it out to a middleman who does. Payment is either made by cash, or the amount is written off in the workman's book against him and deducted from his wages. This tends to induce him to get into debt, and, indeed, it sometimes happens that the men are so deeply indebted towards their employers that they receive no wages at all. Where the firm does not provide food the artisan eats at the nearest *traktir*, or low-class eating-house. If his family is with him, his wife buys food at the market and prepares it for him. Sometimes a number of workmen club together as an *artel*, and depute one of their number to cater for the rest. In this way a man can be fed for about five to seven roubles a month. The food of the Russian poorer classes consists of rye bread, *kasha* (a sort of gruel), *shtchi*, or cabbage soup, and occasionally some dried fish or a little meat. Their ordinary beverage is tea, of which they are great consumers, and in summer also *kvas*, a drink made of either bread or a certain kind of cranberry, which is very refreshing in summer. But what the Russian likes best of all is *vodka*, a very strong kind of spirits made of potatoes. The working man cannot afford it every day, but he puts by his kopeks until he has enough to buy a bottle, and then he gets thoroughly drunk. Drunkenness is a very common vice in Russia,

and it is no unusual thing to see people lying in the streets at 10 A.M. dead drunk, and in winter drunken men are often found frozen to death in the snow.

Wages vary considerably, being much higher in the Western than in the Eastern provinces, relatively as well as absolutely, for although in the East the men obtain more extras in the way of housing, and sometimes food, even with these additions there is a difference in favour of the West, where conditions are more similar to those of Europe. Payment is by piece-work, as it is found that when an artisan receives so much a day without regard to the amount of work done, he gets lazy and shirks his duties. Monthly earnings in the Moscow rayon range from 10 to 15 roubles on an average for men, and they are about 10 roubles for women; they are 20 per cent. higher in the South, and 30 to 50 per cent. higher in Poland; they are somewhat lower in the East. In Poland there are fewer holidays, which partly accounts for the higher rate of pay — 270 to 290 to 300 days' work, as compared with 220 in Russia proper. The coal miners of Russia celebrate an even larger number of festivals, but the men employed on furnaces work more. Low as the wages are, they are often still further reduced by retentions and fines, and they are not usually paid at regular intervals, but on the expiry of the contract, which may be for six months; during this period the men are almost the slaves of their employers. But in the more progressive establish-

ments the custom of paying wages fortnightly or even weekly is becoming general.

The hours of labour, which were formerly not limited at all by law, have now been fixed at 11½ per day. But some employers have voluntarily reduced hours to 10 or 10½, and find that the results are even more satisfactory. The eight hours' day has occasionally been tried, but does not seem to have been a success. There are strict laws concerning child and female labour. No child under 12 years may be employed in factory work at all, and to employ those between 12 and 15 the permission of the Minister of Finance is required. No children may be employed at night, save in glass works, and then only for 6 hours on end, to be followed by 12 hours' rest. This rule was afterwards extended to women, save where the male head of the family is also employed; youths of 15 to 17 are in the same conditions. Factory inspectors, with very wide powers, have been appointed, who, besides controlling child and female labour, by the law of 1897, supervise adult labour as well; they see that the regulations concerning hire and salaries are carried out, they intervene in all disputes between masters and men, and try to bring about conciliation. They send in annual reports on the state of labour, which at first were published, but since 1886 no more have been issued, for it was thought that some of the views expressed were of too liberal a character. By one of those strange contrasts so characteristic of modern Russia these Government

inspectors, officials appointed by officials for official purposes, were mostly Socialists, and have actually been known to encourage workmen to strike for better conditions.

Employers' liability looms large on the statute-book of recent years; the most recent Bill is that of January 1, 1904, the prescriptions of which are very strict. If an accident occurs in a factory and it is proved that the owner has not complied with the regulations for the safety of his men, he is liable to imprisonment for from two to six months. If he has not broken the law, but has omitted some necessary precaution, he may be imprisoned for not more than two months. He is, in addition, subject to an *amende honorable*, imposed by the clergy of the confession to which he belongs. For instance, if he is an Orthodox Christian he may be forced to ring bells or execute other hard work in a monastery for three months; a Catholic may be ordered to attend early Mass every morning for an equal period. If an artisan is injured so that he loses all or part of his capacity for work he receives a pension equal to two-thirds of his salary. In the case of a minor the pension increases in proportion to what he would be earning had he not met with the accident. All hospital expenses, and, in case of death, burial fees, are charged to the employer. The widow of a man killed in an accident receives one-third of what her husband earned, and the children one-sixth each up to fifteen years of age. If both parents are dead each child receives one-fourth.

Parents, grandparents, and even brothers and sisters, under certain circumstances, receive pensions. If both parents are killed in the accident the child receives a double pension. But the total of pensions due in consequence of a single accident must not exceed two-thirds of the man's wages. The pension is payable by the employer even if he was guilty of no neglect.

It will be seen that the Russian Government is apparently solicitous of the welfare of the artisan class, but the law is not always carried out stringently. The employers are often rich and influential, and they have means of "squaring" some of the officials, who find that it does not pay to be too strict. Moreover, it must be remembered that all these measures were extorted by the fear of strikes and of political agitation. The present troubles are likely to produce further concessions in this direction.

Russian labour is, on the whole, in a much worse condition than that of Western Europe; the men are underpaid, ill-fed, worse housed, and in every way in a most backward state. But it does not follow that they are cheap in the long run. One of the causes of the failure of so many foreign industries in Russia is that the foreign capitalists thought that as wages were low labour must be cheap. But the enormous majority of the artisans were utterly untrained and ignorant, so ignorant that the flames from the converters in the Donietz valley were believed by them to be hell fire, and they could

not be induced to accept employment in connection with those works. The Russian workman, it cannot be too often repeated, is by no means stupid, and those who are in a position to compare him with his colleagues in other countries are convinced that he has great industrial possibilities. But he has no initiative, he requires constant supervision, and he still has a tendency to migrate and change his occupation. When the harvest is good and the peasants have money to spend, an increasing industrial production is desired, but it is just then that it is most difficult to get labour; while when the harvest is bad, and there is less demand for manufactures, the peasants are driven by hunger to seek work in the mills, and wages are thus cut down doubly. The general result is that the productive value of the Russian workman is far below that of the Englishman or the German, and a larger number have to be employed to produce the same amount. According to Professor Mendeleieff 16.6 men are needed for 1,000 spindles in Russia, while in England 3 suffice, or even less. In a few mills, however, the number has been reduced to 10 or 12, and in some of the Polish mills and in the great works at Narva to a little over 6. For 1,000 mule spindles 7 Russians are required to 2.47 Englishmen.

Another factor which raises the cost of production is the carelessness of the Russian workman, which makes his insurance against accidents three times as costly as it is in England or Germany. He also requires great supervision, for he is apt to be lazy and

to waste his time. He is docile, kindly, submissive, quick to learn, and good-natured, but he has occasional outbursts of wild-beast fury.

The most interesting problem in connection with Russia's industrial proletariat is that of its political development. The earlier revolutionary movements comprehensively and vaguely classed under the name of Nihilism hardly touched the lower classes at all, but were limited to the aristocracy and the "intellectuals." In fact, the peasants and artisans failed to understand the ideas of the revolutionists, and suspected those who professed to be fighting for their cause. The persecutions following on the murder of Alexander II., organised by the late M. von Plehve, then Director of Police, put an end to Nihilism for the time being. But while the peasant continued in his old course unchanged for generations, the industrial movement was calling the new artisan class into existence. The fiscal policy of the Government, primarily designed to make Russia wealthy and self-supporting, incidentally created a social problem which is now becoming a political one and constitutes a grave menace to the existing order of things. The workmen of Poland and those of the South Russian iron works are becoming more like the artisans of Western Europe. The factory is a potent instrument of national evolution and a moulder of character; it not only transforms the raw material into the finished product — it transforms men, inspiring them with new ideas and driving them to new movements. That which the *mujik* accepts with resigna-

tion and humility, the artisan first discusses and questions, and then revolts against. He has a new feeling of human personality and dignity; he is more civilised and more self-reliant.

The first movements among the working classes were economic rather than political. By Russian law all strikes are illegal, and the strikers are liable to imprisonment or deportation to their native villages. But it must be remembered that in the early days of Russian industrialism strikes were mere outbursts of savage fury; when material conditions became unendurable, the artisans would go out on strike, advance impossible demands, or even no demands at all, and then set fire to buildings and smash everything they could lay their hands on, sometimes including the heads of unpopular employers or managers. The disturbance would be quelled in the usual fashion — the factory police[1] cannot control the rioters, reinforcements are asked for, and in due course the *gendarmes* and the Cossacks arrive, whips are freely used, and then revolvers and rifles. "Order is re-established," which, translated into plain English, means that a large percentage of the strikers have been killed or wounded.

But within the last few years the Russian artisans have been affected by the Socialist propaganda. Labour organisation has hitherto been strictly forbidden in Russia; it was, indeed, a criminal offence. But a movement in this direction commenced in the

[1] Every factory is obliged to keep a certain number of policemen on the premises to maintain order.

late eighties or early nineties, with the foundation of the "Union of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Classes," among the factory hands of St. Petersburg, with purely economic objects (higher wages and shorter hours). It had at first very few members, and indeed it was not desirable, under Russian conditions, that it should be otherwise. But all the members were active agitators who preached the theory of labour organisation among the workmen of the capital. A certain number of students then began to take an interest in the movement, and helped to collect subscriptions for it. The methods resorted to for this purpose were sometimes rather curious. Students' balls and festivals of various kinds were arranged, money was raised "for a struggling artist," "for a starving family," or "for a poor student girl dying of consumption." People of the upper classes often gave generously for these objects, knowing well for whom the money was really intended. But the suspicions of the police were easily aroused, and a close watch was kept on the cashiers of students' balls, so that in some cases the agitators were actually reduced to stealing in order to get funds for the propaganda. The Union's first trial of strength was the strike movement of 1896, in which 30,000 workmen in the textile trades took part. The result was the enactment of new labour laws, reducing the working day to 11½ hours, and the enhanced prestige of the association among the artisans. A paper was started called the *Workers' Mind*, written en-

tirely by artisans, with the object of promoting intercourse between the various classes of workmen. After the strike there was hardly an artisan who did not read the paper or the other literature distributed by the Union. Similar organisations were formed in Moscow, Kiev, and Ekaterinoslav, when the same tactics were adopted as in the capital. The Government's policy of exiling some of the leaders of the workmen's movement from St. Petersburg to other towns merely helped to spread the agitation. In 1898 the Russian Social Democratic party was formed, which had wider objects and was more highly organised. Eventually the various branches of the Union of Struggle became local committees of the Social Democratic party. But soon after its formation the members of the Central Committee were arrested, and the party remained in an amorphous state without leaders.

In the meanwhile another society had been formed, the Jewish Bund, which is a league of Jewish workmen of a Socialist character. Its chief strength being in the frontier provinces, it made a specialty of smuggling forbidden literature across the border. Other working-class societies of a more or less Socialist character were formed among the various non-Russian races of the Empire, especially in Poland and Lithuania.

The great defect of all these movements was want or unity. There was no common action between the groups of the various towns, and moreover there were many disputes over shades of opinion. To

obviate these evils a central committee of organisation was formed, but it was not very successful, at all events at first. The whole movement is still in a transitory stage, and has given a further proof of the Russian's innate weakness for organisation.

But while Socialism was spreading as to numbers, it was changing somewhat in character. In the first place, as the Russian artisan was becoming more civilised, he became also more orderly. Strikes were no longer mere outbreaks of violence, but began to assume a peaceful character, and to be more like similar occurrences in other countries. In 1902 there were strikes in various towns of Russia in which the men distinguished themselves for the moderation of their demands and their good behaviour. Managers and employers have told me how surprised they were at this change, adding that, if the artisans were more conscious of their rights and more exacting, at the same time they were more reasonable and open to argument. "We can show them our balance sheets so that they may see for themselves how far we can go and what is impossible." In the second place, labour organisation was ceasing to be purely economic, and was assuming a political character. With the increase of education the workmen were beginning to question the advantages of autocracy, and becoming less imbued with the traditional veneration for the Tsar; they were also more in contact with the intellectual malcontents of the upper classes. Students, professors, engineers, lawyers, and doctors were once more awakening to

political agitation, and were at last beginning to be understood by the people. Persons of the higher class would go among the workmen in disguise, and obtain employment in the factories, so as to study the conditions of Russian labour at first hand and propagate revolutionary ideas. Of course great secrecy had to be observed, for the mere fact of visiting artisan dwellings is enough to arouse the suspicions of the authorities. The artisans were told that, although their real requirements might be economic rather than political, no remedy was possible until the existing form of government was altered. The brutal conduct of the soldiers and police whenever strikes occurred was not calculated to make the artisans enamoured of the present state of affairs. Revolutionary literature and revolutionary propaganda became more and more political, and indeed, when we speak of Russian Socialism, we mean something different from the Socialism of Germany or Italy. Collectivism is not regarded as a matter of immediate interest save by a small section of the party, and ordinary civil and political rights are the main desideratum. In the various proclamations circulated it is always the Government that is attacked rather than the capitalists, especially in recent times.[1] Most of the capitalists themselves are now more or less in sympathy with the demands for reform, being none too satisfied with the action of the authorities. "When there is a disturbance," a manufacturer

[1] It must be remembered that many of the reforms demanded by the Russian Labour party have been granted in other countries.

told me, "the Cossacks and *gendarmes* steal everything that the workmen leave, and there is no getting compensation." The Government being a Government of bureaucrats, does not find much support among practical men of business.

As soon as the authorities realised that the labour movement was assuming a political tone, they were much disturbed, and in Moscow a curious attempt was made by General Trepoff, then Police-Master, to cope with the situation. On the advice of a certain Zubatoff, an ex-revolutionist turned informer and made Chief of the Secret Police, he decided to permit the formation of working men's associations, which should, however, be controlled by means of spies, so that under the guise of Socialism they should be kept within the path of loyalty. Police agents disguised as workmen obtained employment in the factories, and promised the real artisans every possible advantage if they would only cease listening to the students and other malcontents. Numbers of them were taken in and joined these new societies, which were formed all over Russia. In the meanwhile the Social Democratic movement was spreading, and organised strikes in various industrial centres — at St. Petersburg, at Baku, at Rostoff-on-the-Don — assumed a more pronounced political character, although economic questions were still to the fore. All this showed that the Trepoff-Zubatoff system was a failure.

Finally the police-agitators determined on a real trial of strength by organising a general strike in

Moscow. Unfortunately, however, the matter came to a head in the works of Messrs. G——, a French firm of old standing, which enjoyed powerful protection at St. Petersburg. The dismissal of two men was the pretext for the strike, and a deputation of the Zubatoff society demanded an audience with the director. The latter refused, among other reasons because, had he received a deputation from an absolutely illegal body, he would have exposed himself to severe penalties. But, much to his astonishment, he was visited a short time afterwards by General Trepoff's aide-de-camp, who ordered him to reinstate the men and receive the deputation at once. The director again refused, upon which General Trepoff summoned him by telephone to repair to the police office. One of the partners of the firm went, and the Police-Master repeated the order, threatening to expel Messrs. G—— from Russia in case of non-compliance. M. G—— thereupon said that he would give way under this threat of violence, but that he required a written order from the General, and that he would take measures to protect his interests. The order was promised but never sent. The management subsequently received the "labour" delegates, who immediately claimed 100,000 roubles as indemnity for past injuries, an impossible increase of wages, and made a number of extravagant demands, which were naturally refused. The consequence was that a strike broke out in this factory, followed by that in several other works. M. G—— then left for St. Peters-

PALACE OF PETROSSKY AT MOSCOW

burg to confer with the French Ambassador. When General Trepoff heard of his departure, he too set out for the capital by the next train, arriving a few hours later. But at the various Government departments to which he repaired — the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Interior, etc. — he found that he had been everywhere preceded by M. G—— and the Ambassador. General Trepoff was severely reprimanded and obliged to go and apologise humbly, and, it is said, was even suspended from his office for three months. In the meanwhile, the strike continued for several weeks, and by the time it came to an end the men obtained no concessions, but lost 600,000 roubles' worth of wages. This result was practically a death-blow to the Zubatoff system, and although some of the clubs still exist with a few members who serve as show-workmen whenever demonstrations of loyalty are required, they no longer have any real influence.

To come to more recent times, the war has undoubtedly exercised considerable influence over the working classes. The outbreak of hostilities was the signal for a recrudescence of the revolutionary propaganda, and quantities of pamphlets and proclamations were circulated all over the country, especially among the factory hands. The economic distress caused by the war has been the best argument for the revolutionists, while owing to the utter absence of victories, there is no consolation of national pride to compensate them. The working classes are reading the newspapers more and

more, and even the optimistic and sketchy official accounts are not likely to promote patriotic ardour. Lack of employment, which has rendered the conditions of the artisans even worse than they are in normal times, the general discontent among the upper classes, and the partial, if temporary, freedom of the Press, have all contributed to play into the hands of the agitators.

The strikes in January and February have marked a new era in the history of Russia. They cannot certainly be regarded as an organised uprising of the labouring classes against oppression; but disjointed and ill-organised as they were, the fact that they broke out at the same time in so many different centres is in itself a significant symptom, showing that some sort of common feeling is being developed among the Russian workers. Economic in their origin and due to the wretched conditions of the people, the provocative and foolish attitude of the authorities enlisted the sympathies of the intelligent upper classes, and gave the movement a genuine political character. There may be now a chance of a union between the various revolutionary groups, and, indeed, among all classes of society. The trouble has been spreading ever since January 22nd, the political character it has assumed has obscured the social problem for the time being. But the latter will probably come to the forefront once more when the constitutional question has been decided.[1]

[1] The programme of the Social Democratic party includes a number of political demands, and advocates the establishment of a Democratic and Repub-

The total numbers of the Russian factory hands are calculated, as I have shown, at a little over 2,000,000 (in 1897). These would seem but a trifle when compared with the immense numbers of the total population of the country; but it must be remembered that they represent a total industrial population at least four times as large, for to each working man or woman three non-working members of the family may be added. Thus we have some 7,000,000 or 8,000,000 persons dependent on industry. To them must be added another eight or nine millions of persons employed in trades and handicrafts and shops (including their families), so that we have an urban population of about 16,000,000. They represent, moreover, far more wealth and intelligence than a corresponding number of persons of the peasant class, for industrial production is now actually superior to that of agriculture.

lican Government, universal suffrage for all citizens over twenty years of age, biennial Parliaments, payment of deputies, freedom of the Press, of speech, of meetings, and of association, personal and domiciliary inviolability, abolition of privileges, equality of all classes, races, and religions, option of Home Rule for the non-Russian races, the election of judges, abolition of the standing army, the separation of the State from the Church, free and compulsory education, etc., etc. Among the labour proposals are an eight hours' day, prohibition of overtime, restriction of child and female labour, State insurance against accidents, old age pensions, prohibition of payment of wages in kind and of deductions, weekly payments, and the establishment of labour tribunals.

CHAPTER XII

THE EFFECTS OF THE WAR ON THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

WHILE Russia was just beginning to recover slowly and painfully from the effects of the industrial crisis, the war with Japan suddenly, almost unexpectedly, broke out. The Russian Government desired to acquire certain advantages in the Far East which Japan regarded as incompatible with her own national aspirations, and it proceeded to a series of actions with a view to realising them. But it never believed that Japan would make war at all, and it made no adequate preparations for the struggle. The Russian public was even more ignorant than the Government of the state of Japanese feeling and military preparations, so that the outbreak of hostilities came as a bolt from the blue to the great majority of the nation. At the same time, just as Russia's military arrangements were totally inadequate to cope with the situation, she was equally unready from an economic point of view.

The effects of the war on the economic situation are of two kinds, viz., those which affect the finances of the State, and those which affect the country's national economy. Of the former it is very difficult

to speak with any degree of certainty. Russian official pronouncements on finance are extremely cryptic utterances, which it is impossible for an outsider to unravel or verify. To realise the financial conditions of the Russian State, we must first say a few words on the question of imports and exports, and secondly, the balance of indebtedness. The total average annual Russian exports for five years ending with 1901 were 767,806,800 r., while the corresponding imports were 704,522,600 r., leaving a favourable balance of trade of 63,284,200 r. But in addition to the imports, Russia has other liabilities to put on the debit side, viz., the interest on the public debt, the profits of foreign capital invested in Russian industries, money spent by Russians abroad, and the cost of war material bought abroad, and certain other items, such as smuggling and false customs declarations. M. Schwanenbach, a Russian Government official, in 1899 calculated the total value of these liabilities, minus the last named, at 260,000,000 r. (the interest on the debt, 170,000,000 r.; [1] profits on foreign capital, 24,000,000 r.; expenses of Russians abroad, 50,000,000 r.; war material, 16,000,000 r.). But, according to Mr. Lucien Wolf, even this is not enough, and the deficit of 197,000,000 r. thereby obtained in reality should be 267,000,000 r., or, on a less pessimistic estimate, 250,000,000 r. The interests on foreign money invested in Russia should, I think, be placed even

[1] The total debt now (January, 1905) amounts to 7,066,490,636 r., with an interest of over 300,000,000 r.

higher. This sum is paid, according to the same authority, out of the gold reserve of 1,900,000,000 r., which the Government retains in the Treasury, in the Imperial Bank in circulation at home, and in the hands of foreign bankers. The hole made in the reserve is partly compensated for by the internal output of gold valued at 30,000,000 to 40,000,000 r. The interest of a large part of the foreign capital invested in Russia has not been paid for during the last few years owing to the industrial crisis. But even this leaves a large deficit, which has to be made good by fresh borrowings. The Russian Government, if we are to rely on these estimates, seems to be in the position of a company which can only pay the interest on its shares by making further issues. In the case of a private company this state of things could not last very long, but in that of Russia it has been going on for many years, and still the foreign public continues to lend. The reasons for this confidence are manifold, but the most important is the fact that hitherto Russia has always paid the interest on her debt punctually — even in the case of the English bondholders during the Crimean War. Then there are the manœuvres of the Russian Government on the foreign, and especially the French, Press; and, according to Dr. Dillon, the fact that the possession of this large store of gold, to maintain which Russian financiers turn their every effort, even to the extent of impoverishing the country by making it necessary for the peasant to sell grain for

export when he has not enough to eat, gives Russia "a leverage disproportionately greater than that to which she is entitled in virtue of her army, her navy, and her finances." For she controls so large a supply of the world's gold that she influences the banking interests of every country.

The chief answers made to these statements in official Russian quarters are: first, that with the existing gold reserve Russia can always obtain further credit, and that the gold reserve itself can be spent for war purposes; second, that a large part of the sums borrowed have been expended on useful and potentially profitable purposes, such as railways and public works; and third, that Russia has such endless resources that whatever temporary economic difficulties she may encounter, there cannot be the slightest doubt as to her emerging from them triumphantly. As for the first contention, there is undoubtedly some truth in it, and by sacrificing future prospects and plunging the nation still deeper into debt, warlike adventures may yet be indulged in. As for the money expended in public works, most of it is, at all events for the present, an unprofitable investment; the railways, especially since the building of the Siberian line, show a growing deficit even on the working expenses. In future things may improve, but the railways have always been built with an eye to strategic rather than to commercial considerations; they will, moreover, have to be largely relaid. The general resources of the Empire are, as I have shown, very great, but

they are mostly undeveloped, and it will be long before they can become really profitable. As an instance of the condition of many of these sources of wealth, the following anecdote is characteristic. An English man of business was consulting his Russian representative about the advisability of investing money in a certain mine in Asiatic Russia. The Russian said that the mine was good, "but it is three hundred miles from the nearest road."

At the beginning of the war the Government had a very large gold reserve, which an enterprising English journalist was allowed to photograph, and the rosiest accounts were published as to the flourishing conditions of the nation's finance. It must be remembered that the policy of the Russian Government has always been to keep the State wealthy at the expense of the population. Ever since Ivan the Terrible the Tsars have been fabulously rich princes of a very poor country. The Russian State to-day possesses immense tracts of land, valuable mines, railways, industrial concerns of all kinds, and may be regarded as a gigantic business undertaking. The system is part of Russia's general policy, for it enables the Government to undertake great schemes of territorial expansion, while keeping the people in a state of economic subjection and rendering them incapable of rising against their rulers. Of course the final object is to increase the wealth and the importance of the whole Empire, but everything is done from a narrow bureaucratic

point of view, so that the end is apt to be forgotten in the elaboration of the means.

To come to more concrete matters, on the outbreak of the war the financial position was as follows:

Reserve from the "Free Balance"	157,000,000 r.
Reduction of ordinary expenditure	148,000,000 r.
French 5 per cent. loan	272,000,000 r.
Total	577,000,000 r.

In September an issue of Treasury bonds was made for 150,000,000 r., which brought the total, after deducting certain items, to 717,000,000 r. In December 621,000,000 r. had been spent for ten months of the war. The expenditure had been at the rate of 40,000,000 r. per month during the first six months, but it subsequently rose to over 70,000,000 r. for the last five. That left 96,000,000 r. in January, 1905. To this must be added the German loan of 500,000,000 marks, which actually brought in about 221,000,000 r., and in March an internal loan of 200,000,000 r. was issued, so that the total amount was 515,000,000 r., which should suffice to carry on the war for seven months longer. But apart from the fact that expenses are probably even higher, many items being omitted from the above estimate, and that they must go on increasing to make good the wastage in men and stores, the revenues are actually decreasing on account of the shock which the war is causing to trade and industry. The liquor traffic, which is one of the Govern-

ment's chief sources of income, is already decreasing, and is bound to go on doing so to an even greater extent, *vodka* being a luxury for the lower classes, on which they spend what remains over from necessities. The railways are likewise suffering from the general stagnation of business, and are showing a falling off of profits. In the matters of customs the same phenomena are taking place.[1] Moreover, it is difficult to say what Russia's reserves mean in actual money obtained. Well-informed persons are convinced that the Government has had to make very heavy sacrifices to obtain these loans, and that while they were floated comparatively high, if the secret accounts of the Russian Finance Ministry with the foreign bankers who carried out the operations were published, we should see how the nation has been fleeced for the appearance of prosperity. The same applies to the course of the exchange which throughout the war has maintained itself extraordinarily favourable to Russia. But even in the most hopeful circumstances Russia will soon have to float further loans in Berlin or Paris if the war lasts beyond the spring, and to obtain them the terms will become increasingly onerous. Russia may perhaps get these loans, but at an ever greater sacrifice, which will be a terrible burden in days to come. The Empire still enjoys a certain

[1] The total revenues of the State for 1903 were 2,202,708,141 r.; the estimated revenue for 1904 is 2,064,138,719 r.; and for 1905, 1,994,634,256 r. Customs in 1905 show an estimated decline of 85,000,000 r. as compared with the returns for 1903.

amount of credit abroad, but an uneasy suspicion is beginning to spread about; in consequence of the industrial bluff, the political and military bluff, the foreign investor now fears that the state of her finances may possibly be only another piece of bluff, likely to end in disaster, just as the others have done.

We see that the Government has met the expenditure for the war entirely by means of loans, without increasing taxation, save in one or two unimportant items; but with a declining revenue, a people who are becoming poorer, and the service of this hugely increased debt to be paid, it will be necessary to impose fresh taxes, although the nation is already taxed up to the hilt. Finally, there are rumours which obtain credence in well-informed quarters in Russia itself that large unauthorised issues of notes are being made; that old notes withdrawn from circulation are being reissued; and that the Government is paying for some of its stores and war material in bills at two years' date.

I shall now come to the effects of the war on the private economy of the nation. Some of these consequences affect the country as a whole, while others react with especial force on particular districts or certain branches of trade.

In the first place there is a general feeling of uncertainty as to the situation both in the present and the near future. Although it is not believed in Russia that the State is on the verge of bankruptcy, there is a universal want of confidence and

an anxiety as to what the next day may bring forth, which is paralysing for business activity. No one knows how the country will bear the terrible strain of expenditure, what new taxes will be imposed, what further loans will be issued, and what the effects of the internal troubles may be. Just as the breakdown of the army and the navy have shaken public confidence in Russia's military omnipotence, so there is great scepticism as to the economic stability. There is a general stagnation of business, which affects every trade and every part of Russia. No one dares embark on new enterprises, nor extend old ones. Those who have money prefer to keep it in their safes rather than invest it. The building trade, which is a fair index of the general state of affairs, has never been so slack before, and hardly any new edifices are begun unless they are absolutely necessary. To quote a particular instance, the 20,000 masons, builders, painters, stone cutters, etc., from the Government of Nijni Novgorod, who are in the habit of migrating every autumn to Odessa for the building and repairs which are executed before the winter sets in, were warned last summer by the Governor of Odessa not to come, as they would find no employment. In other towns the same slackness prevails.

A most serious manifestation of this uncertainty is the restriction of credit. As I have often repeated, Russian trade is very largely built up on credit, which is given more easily and for much longer periods than is customary in Western Europe, and

many Russian industries exist solely on borrowed money. The Russian banks, including the Imperial Bank, are extremely generous in advancing money to traders and manufacturers, very often without being particular as to the guarantees offered. But on the outbreak of the war the private banks ceased to give credit altogether; the Imperial Bank alone continued to do so, but on a restricted scale and with great caution. Private individuals followed suit. Hence it became almost impossible to obtain credit save on very onerous conditions. Moreover, the present situation was seized upon by numbers of persons who owed money as an excellent excuse for deferring or avoiding payment of their obligations. It is generally admitted that the standard of commercial morality in Russia is lower than in the rest of Europe, and in the present instance many debtors who could pay if they wished have made use of the war as a reason for not doing so. Where credit has already been given it is usually renewed, lest the debtor should really be unable to pay and become bankrupt — a proceeding which in Russia is apt to prove easy and not unprofitable — but new credit is very difficult to obtain. Manufacturers no longer consign their goods save for ready money, and this, as there is so little of that commodity about, has meant a very serious diminution of their business; but their losses, either temporary or permanent, have been so great that they dare not act otherwise.

Another important field of activity has been

restricted by the reduction of public works. On the outbreak of the war a committee of economy was formed with the object of cutting down expenses. All public works, save those for military purposes or those which were absolutely necessary, were suspended. A very large number of firms, as I have pointed out in a previous chapter, existed solely on Government orders, so that this reduction meant the almost total cessation of their business. The secretary of an important electrical undertaking informed me in July, that although his firm was working only five days a week, and with half their usual number of hands, it would have executed all its contracts by the end of the year, and had not the least prospect of obtaining others. This is but one instance of many. The Government, moreover, forbade the local authorities to issue loans for the various public works on which they too were embarking with the object of leaving the way clear for future Imperial loans, the chances of which might otherwise have been compromised. This contributed still further to diminish the activity of a number of manufacturers. In some cases the Government authorised certain municipalities to borrow privately, but without making a public issue. The corporations in question offered to pay the firms with whom they proposed to place their contracts in bonds rather than in money; the offers were not unnaturally rejected. The country is in great need of public works of all kinds, for the backward condition of many parts of Russia is inconceivable to

people accustomed to Western Europe; but for the present all progress of this kind is indefinitely postponed.

The war has greatly disorganised the railway service, which has caused a further serious set-back to trade. Even in normal times railway communications in Russia leave much to be desired, and the lines are apt to be frequently blocked, especially in the harvest season. But the war has interrupted the goods traffic to an unprecedented extent. Military trains, consisting almost exclusively of goods-vans, are continually pouring eastward, and the majority of these vehicles on reaching their destination, instead of being returned empty, which would seriously interfere with the further dispatch of troops, are either broken up and used for fuel and building, or employed for local military traffic. New wagons are, of course, being built, but the process is slow, and the shortage is felt everywhere.

The mobilisation is responsible for a further interruption of trade in other directions. The calling out of immense numbers of reservists has had two consequences: on the one hand it has deprived the families of their breadwinners, while on the other it has in many districts disorganized industry by removing the artisans from the mills. Although many factories have had to reduce their staffs considerably owing to bad trade, the mobilisation has not necessarily touched the unemployed. On the contrary, when a manufacturer has to cut down the number of his employees, he naturally begins by

dismissing the less fit and the unskilled; while the men who are called out to serve at the front, at all events in the first instance, are the most fit. Consequently many industries which might have gone on working more or less as usual have been suddenly deprived of many of their best workmen, whom they have had to substitute with unskilled hands. In some cases this occurred actually in undertakings which were executing Government orders for the army! It is said that at the beginning of the war the Government came to a sort of informal understanding with the manufacturers that if the latter avoided dismissing hands as much as possible, and reduced their hours rather than the number of employed, so as not to throw large numbers of men out of work to form a dangerous element of discontent, the Government would abstain from mobilising the industrial districts. The object of this arrangement on the part of the Government was of course to avoid disorders, the war being particularly unpopular with the artisan class, who are largely imbued with Socialism. But as a matter of fact it was only carried out to some extent in the case of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw, and Lodz, and even there it has certainly failed to keep order. Other important industrial districts have been mobilised, such as Odessa, the Donietz valley, Ekaterinoslav, and the minor towns of Poland, and here manufactures have been greatly disorganised; many firms have suffered serious inconvenience from the commandeering of their horses. Employers and em-

ployed have had recourse to all manner of dodges to save the men from going to Manchuria; in several cases, as miners are exempt, numbers of men in the service of iron-masters who own coal mines have been registered as employed underground, thus evading the law.

From the point of view of the reservists themselves, the mobilisation has been an unparalleled misfortune, especially in the case of the factory hands. The large and growing class of permanent working men are wholly dependent on industry; badly paid as they are, they can just manage to live and support their families. Once they are called out to serve with the colours, their wives and families have no other resource to fall back upon, unless the wife is also employed in the mill; but even in that case her earnings are quite insufficient, and application must be made to private charity. The miserable pittance which the Government is supposed to pay is paid irregularly, and sometimes not at all. Thus thousands of families, who at the best of times are in the most wretched material conditions, are now absolutely starving. The effect of the mobilisation of the peasants has been dealt with in a previous chapter.

I shall now indicate some of the more special consequences of the war. In the first place the closing of the Siberian railway to all save military traffic has cut off the Siberian markets, and this has had a most ruinous effect on a number of Russian industries. For many years Siberia and the Far East had offered

outlets of increasing importance for Russian manufactured goods. While the natives required large quantities of woollen and cotton fabrics, the building of many new towns, which has been carried out on the most magnificent and lavish scale, the establishment of various local industries, and, above all, the construction of the great railway itself, on which the opening up of the country chiefly depends, had given a great impulse to Russian industry, especially to the metallurgical branches. The laying down of the line was, as I have shown before, one of the chief causes of the growth of the iron and steel trade, and if the completion of the undertaking left many firms without work, the growth of the Siberian towns, the upkeep and extension of the railway, and the great public works in Manchuria still supported a large amount of industrial activity. The chief hope of an industrial revival after the crisis lay in these Eastern markets. Formerly such trade as there was in Siberia was carried on either by caravan or, in summer time, partly by river. But since the completion of the railway, the old system had been abandoned, and the old organisation for caravan transport had ceased to exist. On the outbreak of the war the line was at once monopolised for military traffic, and only goods of small bulk could be transported by it as far as Irkutsk, while beyond there was no trade at all. A little trade from Siberia to Russia still continued, and arrangements were made to facilitate the transport of dairy produce, but that is but a drop in the ocean.

Certain parts of Russia have suffered in an especial degree by the closing of Siberia. Poland had during the last few years made a speciality of the Eastern trade. The Polish industries have three main outlets for their produce, viz., the local Polish market, the Russian market, and Siberia and the Far East. The first is too small to absorb more than a comparatively small quantity of goods, industry having increased very rapidly in proportion to the population. In Russia proper there is of course a much wider field, but there the Poles are confronted with the competition of the Russian manufacturers, who have been longer established, and, although technically inferior, have the advantage of being on the spot. There remains the Eastern market, and here, where Russians and Poles are practically on an equal footing, the superior skill and more modern methods of the latter have enabled them to beat their competitors and acquire a very large share of the Siberian trade, particularly in the textile line. At the Nijni fair, where the Siberian business is largely negotiated, Warsaw and Lodz have beaten Moscow and Vladimir. The Poles consequently devoted themselves, above all, to cultivating this most promising field of their activities. When the railway was closed, the manufacturers who had never believed that war would break out, suddenly found themselves with huge stocks of unsold and unsaleable goods on their hands. Siberian traders were given absolutely no credit, and it was indeed impossible to forward goods at all save to a trifling

extent by utilising the rivers in summer, and taking one's chance of finding carts or an occasional van on the railway.[1] The Poles suffered to an exceptional degree from this state of things, and have had to rely on the local market and on that of European Russia. The former had been further restricted by the general slackness of business and by the bad harvest, which in some parts was a total failure. In the Russian market, on the other hand, they have the same adverse general conditions, and, at the same time, the additional competition caused by the fact that even the Russian manufacturers are excluded from their share of the Siberian trade.

The metallurgical industries throughout the country have likewise suffered severely from the closing of Siberia. Apart from the direct losses, there is an increased competition. The needs of Siberia were to some extent supplied by the Ural iron and steel works, which, although run on somewhat primitive lines, enjoy the advantage of geographical situation. But when these establishments could no longer dispose of their output in Siberia, they threw all their stock into the Russian market, thereby causing a slump in prices and seriously affecting the Russian industries, especially in the South, where they had been already so sorely tried. Another branch of business which has been temporarily suspended by the war is the export from Odessa to the Far East by sea, which had come to constitute

[1] Or buying Red Cross free freight tickets fraudulently obtained by railway officials. — *The Daily Telegraph*, March 11, 1905.

nearly 20 per cent. of the commerce of the great Black Sea port.

To take the various districts separately, the St. Petersburg area has suffered rather less than other parts of Russia. Many of the largest works are the property of the Government, and were kept busy providing war material; some of the private works were in the same condition. But with these exceptions the other industries all felt the general stagnation. The cotton mills were much less active, and the iron works, apart from those executing Government orders, almost idle. The manufacturers of and dealers in *articles de luxe*, who cater for the smart society of the capital, and those who provide for its amusements and extravagances were, of course, the worst sufferers; for even the St. Petersburg aristocracy, although less affected than a similar class in another country would be, began to realize the necessity for economy. Numbers of families were in mourning for relatives killed at the front, and many others were in a state of anxiety, and consequently less disposed to indulge in gaiety. The Court was much quieter, and many people had lost money on account of the war, or were afraid that they would do so. Thus everybody was growing more thrifty in their expenditure, and still more so as to what they pay for; tradesmen complained of the increasing difficulty of getting their accounts settled. The strikes put the finishing touch to an already disastrous situation, and the uncertainty as to the future in Russia proper as well as in the Far East

had added to the prevailing gloom. The total diminution of business before the strikes was calculated at about 15 per cent., with a tendency to increase. Since the strike the ratio is, of course, very much higher. Numbers of firms which just managed to rub along before the fatal 22nd of January have now had to close, some temporarily and some for good.

In Moscow, which is a far more important commercial and industrial centre, the effects of the war were even more noticeable. All the textile trades reduced their output considerably, the hours of work, and the number of hands. Some factories which had not dismissed many employees increased their holidays beyond the very high number which is usual in normal times. Those few firms which had made no reduction of hands were besieged with applications for employment from workmen dismissed by others less fortunately placed. The prosperity of the cotton trade was largely dependent on the harvest, as the peasants are the principal buyers; this year it has been, on the whole, slightly below the average, in spite of official optimism, whereas only an exceptionally good one could have counteracted the effects of the war. If the agricultural earnings were not appreciably reduced, the supplementary sources of income, on which the peasants are more and more depending, were cut down to vanishing point. The importers of cotton machinery did much less business than usual, as no one dared to open new mills, and the renewal of old machinery was deferred as

long as possible. The silk trade, which had become very prosperous, was almost ruined, from one-third to one-half of the spindles in all the factories being idle. Silk is, to some extent, an *article de luxe*, and is naturally most likely to be affected by the general depression. Of the iron and steel industries, the same may be said as regards St. Petersburg. The various industries of the Moscow rayon, such as those of Vladimir, Tver, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, etc., were all in the same condition. Commerce, which is one of Moscow's chief sources of wealth, was greatly restricted, banking very slack, money scarce, and payments were made largely in the Treasury bonds of the issue of September, 1904, which the banks were obliged to take up whether they wished to or not. All the smaller tradesmen and handicraftsmen, such as carpenters, shopkeepers, provision dealers, etc., felt the pinch to a greater or less degree.

The general reduction of business, according to a number of sources which I consulted, amounted in the autumn to something between 30 and 35 per cent. of the total, and the number of men thrown out of work to 20 or 25 per cent. During the winter things went on getting worse, and of course the strikes and other disturbances have inflicted still further injury.

In the metallurgical and mining districts of Southern Russia the effects of the war are also serious, but they are more difficult to disentangle from the consequences of the previous industrial crisis; the war

has in many cases merely served to accentuate the already existing rottenness. These businesses were, indeed, less fit than any of the others to weather the new storm. At Ekaterinoslav, which is the fifth industrial city of Russia, all the works were doing short time, and some of them were on the verge of ruin. From the Azoff towns, like Mariupol and Taganrog, and others in the interior, one heard of nothing but of furnaces shut down, of firms "applying for administration," or going bankrupt, of dividends conspicuous by their absence, of men thrown out of work. The price of coal, owing to the very small demand on the part of the manufacturers, had fallen so low that it hardly paid to mine it, and many coal pits ceased work. The mobilisation proved particularly disastrous in this part of the country, as the metallurgical industries are even more dependent than others on skilled labour. A general calling out of the reserves in certain districts means the shutting down of all the iron and steel works, for, with profits falling rapidly, the removal of the skilled hands, all too few in Russia, would prove fatal.

Finally we come to Poland. I have already pointed out what an exceptionally rapid development this country has undergone during the last few years, and how, owing to the peculiar nature of its commerce, it has suffered more than the rest of Russia from the war. The situation at Warsaw, Lodz, and the smaller industrial centres has been as bad as possible ever since the outbreak of hostilities, quite apart from the strikes and revolution-

ary disturbances. In Warsaw there were 30,000 men out of work in the autumn, and the number of failures was already enormous — in the tanneries alone there had been 180. Those few establishments which have received Government orders were of course prospering, but they are few in numbers. The public works which had at last been authorised from St. Petersburg were suspended owing to the war. For the same reason a French syndicate which had undertaken public works in other Polish towns withdrew from the arrangement. Attempts at relief were organised, and certain minor public works and one large one — the new bridge over the Vistula at Warsaw — were begun so as to provide employment, but the distress was terrible. With the strikes, all the public and private activity of the town was suspended, and the industrial situation seemed wellnigh hopeless. At Lodz matters were almost worse, for very few of the mills were executing Government orders, and the strikes have been very serious. The number of men out of work before the strikes was 40,000. The men who work at hand-looms at home were the worst sufferers, as the mill owners cut off outside work before beginning to dismiss their regular staffs. During the first nine months of the war there were nearly 300 failures, and the strikes have added very considerably to their numbers. In the rest of Poland the situation is everywhere more or less the same. In the Dombrova basin the textile trades were in a bad way, and the iron and steel works dull; at Skarzysko the industries were gradu-

ally suspending all work. The total linen trade of Poland declined 20 per cent., the cotton trade 30 per cent., the lace trade was almost ruined; jute alone was fairly flourishing, owing to Government orders for sacking.

Various remedies were suggested and attempted to stem the tide of distress. A syndicate of cotton manufacturers was formed with the object of "dumping" their goods into Germany and Austria under cost price, but it was not successful, and only served to slaken the accumulation of stocks. Cheap credit and other similar measures have been advocated, but it is universally felt that the only real remedy would be to end the war, although even that would not make good the damage done.

The total reduction of business (before the strikes) was estimated at over one-third of the country's trade — 750,000,000 r. to 490,000,000 r. Since the strikes the total number of men out of work, including both strikers and unemployed, reached nearly half a million. Here, as elsewhere, the economic distress was the immediate cause of the disturbances, and the people particularly resented being made to suffer in their pockets for a war entered upon to carry out ambitions with which they had not the slightest sympathy.

Thus from one end of the Empire to the other we find the same distress, the same heavy losses, the same lack of employment, the same ruin, actual or imminent. The only firms which prospered were those catering for war purposes. But they were

very few, and, indeed, military orders were placed largely with works belonging to the Government itself, and a good many even went abroad, so that the community at large derived but little benefit from them. Orders for war material, moreover, gave rise to the most gigantic swindles, such as are deemed extraordinary even in Russia. When tenders are invited and sent in, the firms who have most "influence" with the officials send their representatives to the Government department in question, where, after a little amicable conversation, the offer is corrected; that firm which is ready to give the biggest bribes and gives them most judiciously obtains the order. Some of the stories of official corruption in connection with army contracts are simply unbelievable. Firms whose offers have been rejected as impossible suddenly obtain the order, others who had contracted to deliver the goods by a certain date only do so months after, and everything is paid for at the highest price. It is said that the Government pays from 20 to 30 per cent. more than the fair price for army stores.

The large number of unemployed created a serious problem for the Government. The man out of work is always an object of suspicion in Russia, and everything is done to get rid of him or hide his existence. Statistics of unemployment are hardly ever published, or they are glaringly inaccurate. It is well understood that this is the class from which disturbances are most likely to arise, and a careful watch is kept on all who are out of work. On the

outbreak of the war the Police-Master of Moscow (the celebrated General Trepoff) issued a secret circular to all the manufacturers and employers of labour, ordering them to keep him informed of every reduction of their staffs which they might find it necessary to make. Dismissed workmen were liable to be sent home to their villages, while others voluntarily wandered about in search of work elsewhere. There was no attempt to cope with the question systematically beyond trying to hide its existence. Besides those who are absolutely without work, there was a still greater number of men who had less employment than before, who worked four or five days a week or on short hours or lower wages; even their situation, when we remember how low their normal earnings are, how numerous their holidays, and how little they have to live on in the best of times, was anything but enviable. Very recent events have made things much worse, and greatly added to the unemployed and to the elements of disorder. The three factors of the present state of affairs — the war, the economic distress, and the revolutionary agitation — are closely bound up and react on each other.

What is the lesson to be derived from all this? In the first place it brings home to one the extreme dangers of a great modern war to the general state of a nation, especially to a country like Russia. In the second place it has served to show on how unstable a basis the industries of Russia are founded, and to prove that even an autocracy cannot create manufac-

tures for which there is no genuine popular demand. In fact, according to many well-informed persons, the present war has not produced the crisis, but it has merely served to disclose an already existing insecurity by bringing matters to a head. This would to some extent be a parallel to the political situation, for the discontent existed even before the war, although in a dormant condition, and the military disasters have only brought it to an acute stage and made it more widespread.

The economic future of Russia is very difficult to forecast. Some business men profess to believe that as soon as the war is over there will be a great revival of trade; that the Government will at once undertake new railways and new public works on a large scale, and, in fact, go on in the old way; and that the public will at once embark on all kinds of new enterprises, and buy up the things it had done without during the war. Other men of business, and they are the majority, are much less optimistic. That there will be a partial revival is, I think, extremely likely. But apart from the fact that the *industriels* rely chiefly on the Government being in itself an unhealthy sign, the end of the war will probably inaugurate a policy of prudent retrenchment and reform, especially if, as seems likely, the general form of government will undergo a change, and many years must elapse before the country recovers from the effects of the great struggle. Even a general overhauling of the financial and fiscal system and a reduction of that exaggerated protection on which

so many industries live are not impossible. With her immense resources Russia is bound to become one of the great economic factors of the world, and she has endless possibilities of development, but her political bondage and her reckless foreign policy, as well as the attempt to force the pace in the matter of trade, have been so many obstacles to her real and healthy progress.

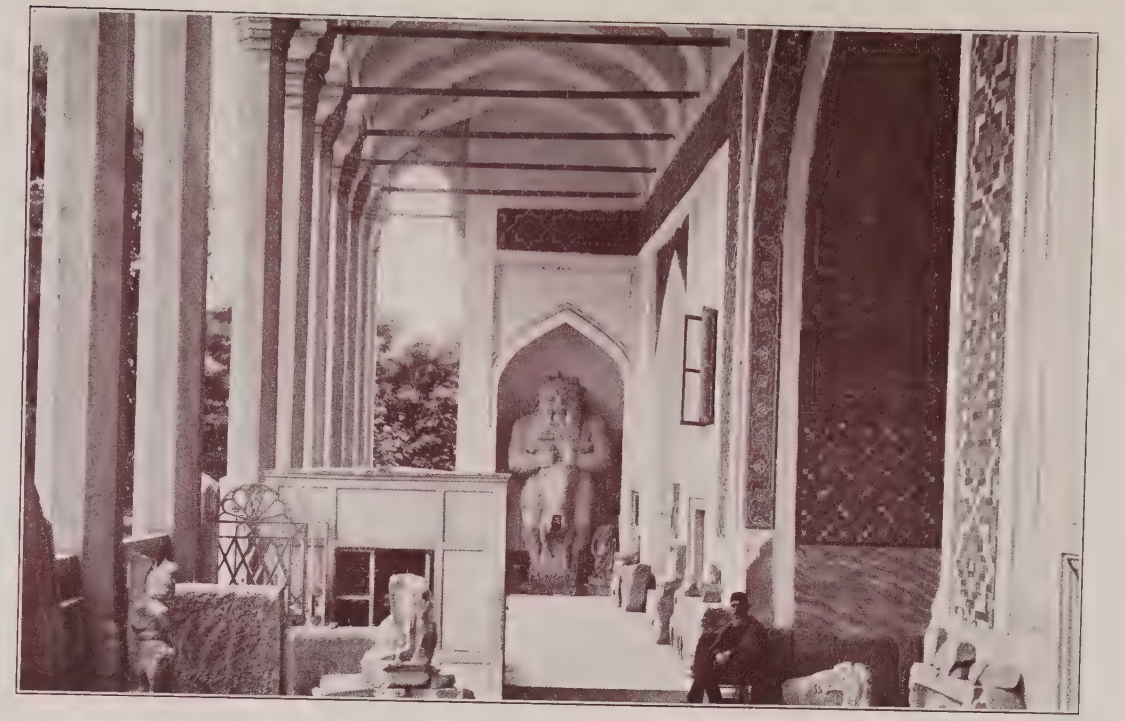
CHAPTER XIII

THE EFFECT OF THE WAR ON RUSSIAN PUBLIC OPINION

OF the many problems raised by the war in the Far East, that of its effect on the public opinion and the internal situation of Russia is perhaps the most important. According to some authorities, the country was patriotically enthusiastic over the campaign, and prepared to fight it out to the bitter end, *coûte qui coûte;* according to others the whole nation was bitterly opposed to the war, and has been ready to stop it at any price. On the outbreak of hostilities both these views were held by different sections of the community, but the question was also regarded from other standpoints by many influential Russians.

In the first place it is necessary to bear in mind that a large part of the population was very indifferent to the campaign, and even at its most exciting period its progress never played such an overwhelming part in the thoughts and conversations of the people as it would have done in the case of a more highly developed community. The great mass of the Russians are so extraordinarily ignorant and wanting in imagination that unless they actually

see and feel the effects of the struggle, they hardly realise that it is going on, and are unable to express any opinion on the subject. The illiterate *mujik*, who had not been called out to serve at the front, and whose earnings were not reduced in a manner which can be directly traced to the war, hardly thought about it at all; and even among the educated classes the great tragedy was not taken so much to heart as was, for instance, the South African war in England, although that was but a trifling affair in comparison. The apathy of the masses was an advantage from one point of view, but on the other hand it deprived the Government of all popular support at a time when it needed it most, and obliged it to fight the battle unassisted by national enthusiasm. A French statesman said that the Boer War was not won by the British army nor by the British generals, but by the temper of the British nation. In Russia that feeling of patriotic determination was almost absent throughout the Far Eastern campaign. There were plenty of individuals who wished to fight to the last, but the nation as a whole was utterly without enthusiasm. At the same time there was a large and increasing number of people who did realize the critical situation of the country brought about by the war; every fresh mobilisation augmented the number of those who suffered from its material effects, and every additional day's fighting meant more artisans out of work, more families deprived of their breadwinners, and a greater reduction of business. The reverses



VESTIBULE IN THE PALACE OF FAIENCES

seriously shook intelligent public opinion and galvanised the forces of discontent throughout the Empire.

Of the various opinions on the war, that of the extreme Chauvinists held by the official classes and their close adherents was the simplest. They had three formulæ for explaining everything in a manner satisfactory to Russian *amour propre:* first, Napoleon's retreat from Moscow in 1812 ("every mile of the Japanese advance into Manchuria puts them more at the mercy of their enemies"); secondly, "all the wars which Russia has fought have begun badly and ended well"; thirdly, "it is not the Japanese who are the real adversaries of Russia, but the English and the Americans who back them up and finance them." This last statement has been brought forward on every occasion, and formed the theme of reams of leading articles, for it was generally believed that the public would view a war against England with far more enthusiasm than could be aroused by the Japanese adventure. There is the old tradition of British hostility to Russia, and the recollection of the many occasions on which British policy thwarted Russian ambitions; then there is the dazzling prize of India which is always dangled before popular imagination; a great many Russians, both military and civilians, are convinced that the conquest of India would be an easy task, and that it could be accomplished without much effort even while the war with Japan was going on. "If the English interfere with our Baltic fleet,"

a Russian said at the time of the North Sea incident, "they may, perhaps, destroy it, but we shall then march down and seize India *tout bonnement.*" I must add, however, that the anti-English feeling is primarily of a political nature, and that it does not extend to individuals. The uneducated Russian has a general suspicion of all foreigners, but the educated classes are as a rule friendly to Englishmen in particular, many of whom have been settled in Russia for many years and even generations.

The extraordinary self-deception of the Russians before the war, and their confidence that the Japanese would never fight at all, are now well known; a Russian official of high rank told me that any one who had suggested at St. Petersburg two years ago that they meant business, and might become dangerous enemies, would have been laughed at as a madman. On the outbreak of the war, even after the early defeats, it was generally thought that as soon as the Russian army was in working order the Japanese would be crumpled up without the least trouble. Consequently even those who disapproved of Russia's indefinite expansion eastward believed that it might be a good thing to give the "cheeky" Japanese a lesson. But these views have been steadily losing support. The Chauvinists decreased in numbers and in the extent of their optimism. At best, some of them continued to believe that Russia was bound to win in the end by force of overwhelming numbers, but that she would merely regain what she has lost — there was less and less talk of signing the peace

in Tokyo. For a long time a considerable section of the Press continued to keep up the illusion that all was for the best, and combined their optimism with bitter diatribes against the iniquities of the Japanese, the English, and the Americans; but as these same papers also published the bad news from the seat of war, their comments sounded a little thin, and ended by becoming the laughing-stock of all sensible Russians. Moreover, even the optimists after a time began to lose their enthusiasm about the policy which led to the war, and to ask themselves whether the conquest of Manchuria was worth all these terrible sacrifices. I have been assured on excellent authority that even before the outbreak of hostilities most of the Ministers, including Count Lamsdorff and Count Muravieff, were opposed to a warlike policy; the only war enthusiast was the late M. von Plehve, but he unfortunately was at that time absolute master of the Tsar's mind. However, even more recently one occasionally heard the Chauvinist view expressed: after the fall of Port Arthur a Russian diplomat expressed regret at the event "because," he said, "this will oblige us to impose much harder terms on the Japanese when we have defeated them than we should have done otherwise." But this may be taken as a mere diplomatic pious opinion. There was, however, a small group of Russian Imperialists of a more intelligent kind who favoured the continuation of the war simply for the sake of Russian prestige, who appreciated the difficulties and dangers, but feared that if Russia gave

away before at least one victory, she would lose all her influence in the East. Nothing but the material impossibility of continuing the struggle would convert them to peace views.

Apart from the Chauvinists, a more general sentiment, characteristic of Russian fatalism, was that the war was a terrible misfortune, over which mere mortals had very little control, and that it will last as long as it pleases God. After the fall of Port Arthur the only popular comment in St. Petersburg was: "It is God's will that we should be punished for our sins." The campaign never excited any feelings of warlike patriotism, and the cause for which it was fought was not regarded in any sense as a national one. The idea of Russian prestige in the Far East only appealed to a very narrow circle of politicians, and the man in the street could not understand of what use Manchuria was to Russia. "We have so much uncultivated and uninhabited land within our own territories that it is useless to go and break our heads over a distant country of very doubtful value." Of those who took this view some believed in a vague way that the Government ought to carry on the war to the bitter end, while others prayed that peace might be concluded as soon as possible, almost on any conditions.

The business world, which is much more influential in the great commercial and industrial centres like Moscow and Odessa than in St. Petersburg, always regarded the war as an unmitigated curse, and the policy which led up to it as criminal folly,

for it has proved disastrous to trade and manufactures, and undermined the whole credit system on which Russian national economy is based. They denounced the action of the Government in no measured terms, they laughed at the Russian generals, they delighted in anecdotes illustrating official corruption or military inefficiency, and never believed in the future of Manchuria — they were far more concerned with the very serious economic situation of the moment than with the prospective advantages to be gained by conquests in the Far East. These ideas may perhaps appear mean-spirited and pusillanimous, but we must remember that this war, unlike those fought by countries under a constitutional *régime*, was not inaugurated with the consent nor even after hearing the views of any but a narrow official class, so that the mass of the nation, in a sense, regards itself as not implicated in it.

But there are others who considered the war from a different point of view, who dwelt less on its military aspects and its economic consequences than on its effects on the internal political situation of Russia. In the opinion of the "intellectuals," who include not only the university professors and members of the liberal professions, but also a number of the more progressive nobles, substantial merchants, and even some enlightened officials, the whole question of the war is intimately bound up with that of Russian reform. This party, if anything so formless and indefinite can be described as a party, while deploring the military disasters and the fearful sacri-

fices in blood and treasure, did not regard them as altogether wasted. They are by no means revolutionists or uncompromising enemies of the existing form of society. Nor are they for a moment to be compared with the British pro-Boers during the South African War, for their ideas are not based on morbid sentimentalism nor on an overwhelming love for their country's enemies. The moral question of the rights and wrongs of the conflict was hardly considered, for to the average Russian the idea that when your country is involved in war you should trouble yourself as to which of the belligerents is ethically in the right is almost inconceivable. But it is from the point of view of their own country's interests that men of this stamp regarded the Russian defeats as blessings in disguise, because they constituted a complete condemnation of the bureaucracy. They believed that Russia's chief need was for internal reforms, and that these could not be obtained until the absolute inefficiency as well as the oppressiveness of the present methods of administration were brought home to the mass of the intelligent people. The question of Russian aspirations and "missions" in the Far East was of comparatively small importance in their eyes, while the demand for internal reforms has been increasing so rapidly as to overshadow all other considerations.

The change of feeling brought about by the Far Eastern campaign finds a parallel in the effects produced in Russia by the Crimean War. The reign of Nicholas I., which was inaugurated with the rising

of December, 1825, was a period of severe reaction and police despotism. Western ideas, which had been making steady progress in Russia under Alexander I., were now rejected as dangerous and contrary to the national genius of the Russian people, and the revolutionary movements throughout Europe in 1848–1849 strengthened the Tsar in this view. The Slavophil party[1] was constantly proclaiming the superiority of everything Russian over that which was European. Moreover, although the uncompromising repression of Liberalism and the iron tyranny of the police were felt to be oppressive, it was generally believed that only under such a form of government could the military supremacy and dignity of the Empire be maintained. With Napoleon's retreat from Moscow fresh in their memories, the Russians were convinced that their country was invincible, and that while the Western nations professed to despise its backward state, they were secretly in deadly fear of its armed might. Even the idea of a possible European coalition against Russia was scoffed at. "We shall throw our caps at them" was the popular expression of contempt for the decrepit West before the virgin strength of the unconquerable Slavs. But when the Crimean War broke out, and instead of easy victories disasters followed upon disasters on the very soil of Russia, a startling change came over public opinion. Men's eyes were opened to the fact that the vaunted military power of

[1] This party is not to be confused with the pan-Slavonic party. The latter advocates the union under Russian hegemony of all the Slavonic races.

the Empire was a delusion, and that brave as were the troops the organisation of the army was deplorable, and all the more intelligent people began to ask themselves what had been the use of all these sacrifices, of all this burdensome oppression, for the sake of military efficiency, if military efficiency had not been obtained. The dormant forces of Liberalism awoke again, and the demand for reforms and for Western institutions became more and more insistent. The Tsar Nicholas, broken in health and spirit by the defeats, realised the necessity for a change of methods, but felt himself incapable of bringing it about. In 1855 he died, some say by his own hand, and left the task of reforming the State to his son. After peace had been concluded, Alexander II. set to work to inaugurate an era of progress. In the first place railways were built, as their absence had led to the breakdown of Russian transport during the campaign. Political and social reforms of the most far-reaching character followed — the liberation of the serfs, the judicial reforms, and the institution of local government. Thus Russia came to reap the greatest moral advantage from the Crimean War, and the Act of Emancipation was regarded as one of its direct consequences; the peasants of certain provinces actually believed that the Emperor of the French only agreed to the peace on condition that the serfs should be freed, and M. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, in "L'Empire des Tsar," tells an anecdote of a peasant who had the portrait of Napoleon III. in his cottage with the inscription, "The Liberator of the Serfs."

But in his later years the Tsar-Liberator lost some of his reforming zeal, and the hoped-for constitution was continually postponed. The march of progress was cut short by the assassination of the Tsar in 1881, as a result of the disappointed hopes of the extreme Liberals. The reign of Alexander III., begun under such tragic auspices, constituted a return to reaction, and Nicholas II. followed in the footsteps of his "never-to-be-forgotten father." The old police system, which had been much relaxed under Alexander II., and the Press censorship, which had become almost a dead-letter, were revived with increased vigour; political offences were persecuted with ruthless severity; the prisons and convict settlements filled with men and women whose only offence was Liberalism; while the dominant note of these two reigns has been the attempt to Russify *vi et armis* the non-Russian and non-Orthodox peoples of the Empire.

Once again public opinion acquiesced in this mode of government, and for the same reason — for the sake of military power and a high place in international affairs, combined in this instance with a horror at the crimes of the Nihilists. Once more the army was regarded as invincible, and the navy equal to any task to which it might be put. The victories over the Turks in 1877, and the rapid progress of Russia in Asia, induced the belief that she was destined to dominate the whole of Asia as well as the Slavonic lands of Europe. Military glory was the Russian people's consolation for the reac-

tionary and persecuting *régime*. Slavophilism and Moscow revived, while St. Petersburg and Europeanism were on the wane. Even many foreign observers of great political insight believed in Russia's invincibility, and fear of the "Russian bogey" has been the keynote of British policy for many years, in the Near East, the Middle, and the Far. At the same time the orgy of industrial protection, inaugurated by M. Vishniegradsky and carried out by M. Witte, created, as I have shown, a number of industrial undertakings and led to the exploitation on a large scale of the mineral resources of the Empire, which induced the belief that Russia was immediately destined to become one of the greatest industrial as well as military powers of the world. The economic crisis of 1897–1902 to some extent opened the eyes of the public to the instability of the economic situation, but the military position was still regarded as unassailable. There were many Liberals who sighed for internal reforms, and revolutionists who conspired against the Government; but the Press was muzzled, and the mass of the public, even of the intelligent public, was unmoved. A variety of excellent reasons for the maintenance of autocracy were put forward — the geographical position which left Russia open to attack, her "mission" in the East, and the ignorance of her people. Many men who in theory were progressives regarded the question of reform as outside practical politics, and consoled themselves with the belief that they would come in due course when the people were ready for them.

In February, 1904, the war with Japan broke out, and day by day the Russian people learned of the disasters which followed one another, unrelieved by the smallest success. In spite of the censorship they heard the story of the breakdown of the military administration, of the disorganisation of the commissariat, of the gross corruption of every department, of the inefficiency of the War Office, of the incapacity of most of the generals, which only made more painful the wholesale slaughter and terrible sufferings of the heroic rank and file. Then the old question arose once more: "What is the use of all this oppression and repression for the sake of military efficiency if our armies are defeated by a despised Asiatic enemy?" The cry was not "Give us back our legions," but "Give us our liberty." A great awakening of Liberalism throughout Russia has been the result, and the Liberal leaders were instinctively led to regard every Russian defeat as a step towards reform. Every one felt that the fate of the Russian bureaucracy was being sealed on the Manchurian plains and the waters of the Yellow Sea. The connection between the progress of the war and that of reform was regarded as so close that in the long interval which elapsed between the murder of M. von Plehve and the appointment of his successor, it was generally admitted that the Tsar was waiting for the result of the great battle, which was then imminent, before making his choice. Another Russian defeat would be followed by the appointment of a Liberal Minister of the Interior, whereas a

Russian victory would have led to the appointment of a second von Plehve. The battle of Liao-Yang ended in a Russian retreat, albeit no inglorious rout, and a Liberal was chosen for the arduous post of Minister of the Interior in the person of Prince Svyatopolk-Mirsky.

The Liberal revival began even before Sozonoff's bomb ended the career of the arch-reactionary, but it could find no public expression. Under the Plehve *régime* to hint at the need for reform was high treason, and the Press had no alternative between abject servility and silence. Since the beginning of the war a certain relaxation in the censorship was noticeable as far as concerned criticism of military affairs, and after that Minister's death much greater freedom was permitted. At first the papers only alluded in guarded language to the general dissatisfaction of the public with the existing *régime*, while the reactionary organs continued their diatribes against the least suggestion of Liberalism. Now and then some well-known professor, lawyer, or man of science would dare to speak his mind openly, and as this action was followed by no penalties others imitated the example. Professor Mendeleieff, for instance, the well-known scientific professor and writer, who before the war had been somewhat lukewarm in his Liberalism, now became much more advanced, and in September he published a remarkable article in a St. Petersburg paper on the need for reforms. He stated that:

"Every Russian knows that matters are not pro-

ceeding as they should in our country, and that in many of our internal affairs there is imperative need for reforms. . . . According to the desires of the Russian people reforms must follow the end of the war with Japan, because it has opened the eyes of every one to the fact that for many years to come we must be ready for other wars, and nowadays we can only be prepared for war when the Empire is internally in a satisfactory condition, with guarantees for the general well-being."

Other notabilities have written more or less in the same strain. Thus Prince Trubetzkoy, the professor at the University of Kiev and brother of the Prince Trubetzkoy who is Marshal of the Moscow nobility, stated in the *Pravo* last October:

"It is neither our army nor our navy that has suffered defeats. The defeats are those of the Russian bureaucracy. To think otherwise would be to cast blame on our glorious army—and that would be not only unjust but criminal. . . . The bureaucracy has been searching for an enemy, but it did not notice the foreign enemy because its attention had been diverted into another channel; it was constantly haunted by the ghost of an internal enemy. It saw its enemy in every man not created to its own likeness; it found treason in every man who placed the dictates of his own conscience above the commands of the bureaucracy. It silenced every one who would have raised a warning voice in time — who would have told the truth to the Throne. And now we are reaping where we have sown. Our bureaucracy

. . . disunites and disorganises only the moderate elements of society. The extreme parties have practically the monopoly of organisation; and thanks to our Press regulations and the activity of our censor, to them also belongs the monopoly of free speech. While moderate people are forced to be silent because of the impossibility of speaking their minds in the censored Press, our streets are inundated with illegal literature. . . . Is it possible that we do not perceive this awful danger, and that at the critical moment we shall meet it in the same way as we met the Japanese torpedo-boats at Port Arthur? . . . The bureaucracy must admit popular control, and must rule the nation with the nation and not against the nation."

The reactionary Press was not silent, and continued to attack the Liberals and Liberalism. The ridiculous *Moskovskiia Viedomosti*, a paper which once wielded great influence, but is now the standing joke of the Russian Press, attributed the Russian defeats to the Liberals. The *Grazhdanin* even attacked Prince Svyatopolk-Mirsky for his Liberalism, and the strange and novel spectacle was witnessed of a Liberal Minister of the Interior confiscating a whole issue of a Conservative newspaper. The *Russkiia Viedomosti*, which is the ablest and most independent paper in Russia, and voices the opinions of the *intelligentia*, has been insisting on the same argument ever since the beginning of the war, and recently it has done so in language that which a year ago would have caused its suspension or even suppression. It has dwelt particu-

larly on the hardships entailed by the war on the working classes, who "are now as at all times and everywhere the chief sufferers." At first it asserted that the war should be ended as soon as the smallest victory enabled the nation to make peace without loss of prestige, so as to turn its full attention to the question of reform. More recently it frankly admitted that Russia has been beaten, and that there was nothing more to be done but to make peace on the best terms obtainable. Other papers took up the same line even more violently, such as the *Nasha Zhizhn* and the *Nashi Dni*, and the question of the constitution which under Plehve it was impossible even to mention is now discussed freely in all the organs of the Press. Some Conservative papers have changed their tone too, and the *Novoie Vremya* has become a convert to Constitutionalism of a mild form, although it continued to advocate the prosecution of the war. At the same time criticisms of the action of the Government and its officials, and accounts of the risings and strikes in various parts of the Empire, were published every day.

Apart from the relaxation of the censorship, a considerable amount of liberty in other directions was allowed. Meetings of a political character have been permitted, and revolutionary speeches delivered with impunity. Various *zemstovs*, assemblies of the nobility, town councils, and other bodies have voted addresses to the Tsar in favour of a constitution, in a tone very different from the Byzantine "May I speak and yet live?" which was formerly the rule.

In the meanwhile the revolutionary agitation gathered strength and extended to all parts of the Empire. Hitherto the great weakness of the Russian revolutionary movement was the fact that it was practically limited to the upper and middle classes, and found but little response among the mass of the people. The devotion of the Russian lower orders to the Church, their superstitious reverence for the Tsar, their ignorance, and their intense conservatism, made it extremely difficult for enthusiastic agitators educated on foreign Liberal philosophy to make much headway with such unpromising material. Their pamphlets could not be read by illiterate peasants, and their ideas were not understood. The revolutionists belonged to another class and another world, and while they were preaching Marxian Socialism and Western constitutions, the peasants, whose one thought was of the *res angusta domi* and who only desired more land, looked on them with suspicion as eccentric and somewhat objectionable "nobles." But of late years the Russian lower classes have been evolving in new directions. I have shown how an industrial population has grown up, and the artisans, who are better educated, are far more amenable to political propaganda than the untutored *mujiks*. The growing contact with foreign countries, the annual temporary migrations of large numbers of Russian labourers into Germany and Austria, and the presence of foreign foremen in Russian factories have contributed to awaken the working classes, and Social-

istic ideas have been gradually penetrating among them. For some time the old revolutionary movement of the upper classes remained isolated from the workers, whose aspirations were almost exclusively of an economic character. But the last few years have witnessed a change in this direction, and in the troubles of 1902 the students and other educated agitators appeared among the strikers and obtained a hearing. Since then the connection has become increasingly close; although the savage repression of the strikes in the towns and the barbarous punishments inflicted on the peasant rioters in the Governments of Kharkoff and Poltava, while adding fuel to the flame, staved off the danger for the time being.

But the outbreak of the war gave a fresh impetus to the agitation, which has become astonishingly active since February of last year. The quantity of revolutionary literature circulating all over Russia was so enormous that the police soon had to give up any attempt to stop it. Had the war been popular, and above all successful, there would probably have been no trouble. But from the beginning it failed to arouse any enthusiasm among the lower classes, any more than it did among the *intelligentia*, in spite of the "popular" demonstrations organised by the police on the outbreak of hostilities. The Russian is neither cowardly nor unpatriotic, as he has proved on a hundred stricken fields. In the Turkish War of 1877, when he believed that he was fighting for a holy cause, when in fact the war had been forced on an unwilling Government by public opinion, he

was only too willing to lay down his life "for God and the Tsar"; even now in the Far East, once he was face to face with the enemy, he has more than justified his reputation for heroism. But the people are without enthusiasm, either religious or national, and the one thought of every reservist was how to evade the mobilisation. All over the country men were wandering about with false passports, or without passports at all, as far as possible from the places where they were registered for military service. Large numbers escaped across the frontiers into Germany or Austria, tens of thousands finding their way to England or the United States. Whole companies emigrated from Poland, and no regiment was free from leakage. The mobilisation ever since the early autumn of 1905 was carried out with increasing difficulty, and caused serious disturbances. At Odessa the situation was at one time very critical, and the reservists committed many acts of insubordination. At Moscow recalcitrant reservists were shot down. Riots broke out in Warsaw, Lodz, Radom, Minsk, Vitebsk, Smolensk, Kanieff, Kharkoff, Ekaterinoslav, Rostoff-on-the-Don, and at a hundred other places. Nowhere was the departure of troops speeded with cheers, no one wished to go to the front, and the number of genuine volunteers, always small, dwindled to nothing. This reluctance extended, in some instances which came to my knowledge, even to the officers. In many large districts and towns the mobilisation has not even been ordered, from a fear of arousing revolt.

The economic distress, largely due to the war, greatly added to the agitation, for there are quantities of workmen out of employment, and a still greater number who are earning less than usual. These form the best soil for sowing revolutionary ideas, for the Socialists were not slow to point out the moral to be drawn from the existing distress. But even the Socialist propagandists dwelt more on the political than on the economic aspects of the situation. In fact, in the present state of Russia, the public mind is so full of politics that any agitation, whatever its cause and original character, invariably tends to become political. All these circumstances have increased the general discontent, until every class and every province is more or less disaffected.

Another of the great hindrances to a reform movement in Russia has always been the want of co-operation among the various groups of Liberals, who quarrel among themselves over theories and words. Liberalism in that country is not an organised and disciplined movement; it is rather a sort of vague general aspiration after political and social changes. These aspirations are partly embodied in a number of secret societies scattered about all over Russia, without much cohesion, many of them limiting their activity to one particular class, district, or race. The vast distances, the want of good communications, the small extent of education, the repressive activity of the police, the universal fear of espionage, the censorship of the Press, and the insecurity of the

postal service, have hitherto successfully militated against combination, not to mention the Russian's love of abstract theories and his unpractical nature. But here, too, we now find the dawn of a new order of things, and the attempt to bring about cohesion which has followed the war may reasonably be regarded as a case of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc.* In the autumn of 1904, on the initiative of a group of Finns connected with a new association called the Emancipation Alliance, a meeting of delegates of the various revolutionary groups convened with a view to bringing about the co-operation of every form of anti-Government action. Although only eight out of the eighteen principal societies were represented, the list of their names indicates the wide differences of aims and aspirations between them: Russian Constitutionalists, Russian Social Revolutionists, the Polish Socialist Party, Lettish Social Democrats, Georgian Social Revolutionists, Armenian Revolutionist Federation, the Polish Nationalist League, and the Finnish Opposition. The first two are Russian parties, which stand for the unity of the Empire, the former favouring a limited monarchy, the latter a republic. The remaining six are local Nationalist groups who aspire to the autonomy, if not to the actual independence of certain provinces of the Empire. Of those who did not take part in the conference the most important was the Russian Social Democratic party, which is the best organised and most formidable of them all. But the mere fact that so many different groups could meet and

agree on certain points is unparalleled in the history of Russia. The resolutions adopted were as follows:

"Considering that the autocratic *régime* constitutes a fatal obstacle to the progress and well-being of the Russian people, as well as of the nations oppressed by the Tsar's Government, and in the actual state of civilisation constitutes an absurd and injurious anachronism; that the struggle against this *régime* could be conducted with much greater energy and success if the activities of the different opposition and revolutionary parties, both Russian and non-Russian, were co-ordinated; that the present moment appears particularly favourable to the active co-operation of all these parties against the autocratic Government, discredited and weakened by the terrible consequences of the war, provoked by a policy of political adventure, the representatives of the Russian Constitutionalists and [here follow the names of the other parties represented], united at a conference, decide unanimously to make the following declaration in the name of all these organisations:

"That none of the parties represented at the conference, while accepting the principle of co-operation, thinks for one moment of departing in any single particular from its programme or its methods of carrying on the struggle which correspond to the needs, strength, and situation of the elements, social classes, and nationalities whose interests they represent. But, at the same time, these parties state that

they all recognise the following fundamental principles and claims:

"(1) The abolition of the autocracy; the suppression of all measures aimed at (against) the constitutional rights of Finland.

"(2) The substitution for the autocratic *régime* of free democratic rule on the basis of universal suffrage.

"(3) The right of each nationality to manage its own affairs, the liberty of national development guaranteed by the laws to all nationalities, the suppression of all violence on the part of the Russian Government in regard to other nationalities.

"In the name of these fundamental principles and claims the parties represented at the conference unite in their efforts to accelerate the inevitable fall of absolutism, which is equally inconsistent with the realisation of all the further aims which each of these parties respectively has in view."

This Emancipation Alliance afterwards drafted a projected constitution on very democratic lines, which was widely circulated throughout the country. But it does not by any means follow that the revolutionary parties are as yet organised into one movement. Each of these groups is much too strongly attached to theories — many of them wild and unpractical — to be able to unite in a definite policy. Nor are assassinations like those of the Grand Duke Serge, or of M. von Plehve, the work of any particular party. They are rather acts of individuals or small groups, resulting from the general state of unrest.

Soon after this conference another meeting of greater practical significance was held in St. Petersburg in November, *i.e.*, that of the representatives of the *zemstvos*. These bodies, which are a kind of county councils, were instituted in 1864 in thirty-four governments as part of the reforms of Alexander II., and it was believed that they were to educate the nation for a constitution by means of local self-government. But during the reactionary reigns of Alexander III. and Nicholas II. their privileges have several times been curtailed, and the late M. von Plehve contemplated suppressing them altogether. They are the special object of detestation on the part of the bureaucrats, to whom the idea that any part of the government of the country should be entrusted to persons who are not officials is anathema. Their financial means are of the scantiest, the governors of provinces have done their best to curtail their powers and nullify their action, and the *zemstvos* of some provinces have been "revised" out of existence.

But in spite of their disabilities and the warfare waged against them, they have achieved some good work, especially in the matter of education and assistance to agriculture. But their importance and the *rôle* they are now playing in Russia is due, above all, to the fact that they constitute the one form of representative government existing in autocratic Russia,[1] and to the personality of their mem-

[1] The town councils, although elective, are much less representative, and have come to be little more than assemblies of merchants. The village peas-

bers. These are men of all classes, and represent the best type of citizenship to be found in the country. For this reason, although strictly speaking their activity should be limited to local affairs, they frequently make pronouncements on matters of general political interest. They have been hampered in every direction by the bureaucracy, and all attempts at unifying them for any common purpose has been strenuously opposed. From time to time they attempted to unite for certain purposes of common interest, but this had hitherto been discouraged and forbidden by the authorities. But finally, last November, under the mildly liberal *régime* of Prince Svyatopolk-Mirsky, they were allowed to send delegates to a conference in St. Petersburg to discuss affairs of State. At the last moment, for some unknown reason, the conference was forbidden, but although not officially sanctioned, it held its sittings in private, and its resolutions were printed in the Russian Press. The resolutions voted embodied the views of the Russian Constitutionalists, and, indeed, of the majority of the moderate Liberals. The bureaucratic system is declared to be the foundation of all the troubles of Russia, for it prevents the existence of mutual confidence between the Government and the people. The necessity that the principle of inviolability of the person and of private domicile should be established, and that no one ought to be punished without trial by a court

ant councils deal only with affairs of very narrow importance and are composed, for the most part, of quite ignorant members.

independent of the administration, are proclaimed. Officials should be answerable to the ordinary courts for all illegal acts. Freedom of conscience, of speech, and of the Press, and the right of association, and the equality of personal, civil, and political rights of all citizens are demanded. "The repeal of all laws involving the legal and political disabilities of the peasantry and holding it fast in its present degraded position" is also demanded, and with this object the administrative supervision over the communes should be abolished. The *zemstvos* and municipal councils must be reformed, and their sphere of activity enlarged, while the institutions in question should be extended to all parts of the Empire.[1] The resolutions end with a demand for the convocation of a National Assembly elected by the people, and the establishment of some form of Parliamentary government. The majority (seventy-one members) demanded that "elective representatives of the people shall participate regularly in the exercise of legislative authority, in the fixing of the estimates of public receipts and expenditure, and in the supervision of the legality of the acts of the administration." A minority of twenty-seven members would not go further, at all events for the present, than to express the wish that the Parliament should "participate in legislation." A separate resolution demanded the repeal of the "minor state of siege"

[1] Hitherto only thirty-four Governments have been endowed with *zemstvos;* among those who do not enjoy that form of autonomy are the whole of Poland and all the frontier provinces.

Act of 1881, and suggested that amnesty should be granted to all political offenders.

These proposals, it will be seen, are far more moderate and practical than those of the revolutionary conference, and, in fact, the backward state of Russia suggests the advisability of proceeding cautiously in the matter of reforms, and of not giving the people the strong wine of universal suffrage at once. Some reformers ask for even less, and would be contented with nothing more than a Habeas Corpus Act, freedom of speech and of the Press, and the overhauling of the administration, so as to put an end to the corruption of the officials. In theory, there is a great deal to be said for this view, and a benevolent despotism — that panacea of all despairing reformers — might prove the best solution for Russia's troubles. But things have now gone too far for half-measures; had the Government met the people in a conciliatory spirit in the autumn, or even up to January 22nd, autocracy in a modified form might have been saved. But the course of the war and the events of the internal situation, culminating in the recent outbreaks, has made such a solution an impossibility. In fact, at subsequent meetings of *zemstvo* representatives, far more sweeping changes have been advocated.

More important than any revolutionary party, than any amount of propaganda and forbidden literature, more than any conference, is the fact that the revolutionary spirit is abroad in the land. It is this spirit which will eventually evolve a reformed

Russia on the grave of the bureaucratic Russia killed in Manchuria. When we find nobles, professional men, university professors, novelists and musicians, manufacturers, merchants, bankers, artisans, peasants, and even priests, agreeing that the present state of things must be changed, the change is only a matter of time. It is true that the Liberals form but a small part of the nation, but they are the active part of it, and the inert masses, if they take no part in the reform movement, do not seem likely to take action against it. Recent events tend to show that there is a dangerous agitation going on even among the peasants, although on lines different from those of the towns. To prophesy how the change will be brought about, or what form of government will eventually be adopted, would be rash indeed, for the situation is altering from day to day. But one thing appears fairly clear, that for the present no general rising has any chance of success. So long as the troops obey orders, and in spite of sensational reports to the contrary there is as yet no evidence that the army is really tainted with disloyalty, an open revolt can easily be put down. That in the face of the overwhelming power which modern weapons confer on a Government, the people should rise and overturn it in a day, as has happened in the past in other countries, is, one would think, almost inconceivable. But with the existence of all these varied elements of discontent arrayed against it, the Government is bound to make concessions sooner or later, out of fear, if from no other motive. For a long

time the forces of Liberalism and reaction have been fighting for the possession of the Tsar's mind, like Hector and Ajax over the corpse of Patroclus. Nicholas II. himself, a well-meaning but feeble-minded and obstinate mystic, swayed now by one set of councillors and now by another, is almost helpless, and in the meanwhile there is chaos and confusion throughout the land. The Rescript of March was the first outward recognition that the days of the autocracy are ended, and the ukase of April 17/30 granting religious toleration is the first real step towards liberty.

It is to be feared, in any case, that Russia is in for a long period of trouble before she settles down peacefully as a Constitutional State on modern lines. It must be borne in mind that the country has been untouched by the great movements which have moulded the history of Europe during the last five centuries — the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the French Revolution — and that she has to learn these three R's of political and intellectual development before she can evolve into a new nation. At the same time she must find the solution of the many special problems by which she is beset, the economic problem, the social problem, the question of the alien nationalities, and, above all, the education of the masses. Then she must produce statesmen, for hitherto she has been ruled by cast-iron bureaucrats, old-fashioned generals, jugglers in finance, and mediæval ecclesiastics, with now and again a man of genius thrown in among them. Here perhaps

the chief difficulty will lie, for while the former rulers will fail to inspire confidence, save perhaps M. Witte, the new men have had but little training. There are large landowners like Prince Trubetzkoy, whose frank and fearless attitude has aroused deserved admiration, professors like his brother, *zemstvo* members like M. Shipoff, who may be counted among the moderate Constitutionalists, and doubtless many others will be found to wield the destinies of the nation. But their training is small and, except theoretically, limited to affairs of purely local importance, and, at all events, at first agitators and adventurers of a dangerous type are likely to come to the fore. In all probability many experiments, many changes, many wild adventures will be undergone before a stable form of government, suitable to the peculiar genius of the people, is evolved. The English revolution lasted from 1640 to 1689, that of France from 1789 to 1815 (or 1871), that of Italy from 1821 to 1870; it would not be surprising if even that of Russia also lasted many years.

What type of political organisation will result from this chaos of warring elements no one can as yet foresee; what form of government is best suited to the Russian nation it were presumptuous for a foreigner to suggest. I have little doubt that with her vast resources and the many good qualities of her people, Russia will eventually emerge into a great, prosperous, and well-governed nation, which will contribute much to the common good of humanity. But the people must first be educated, intel-

lectually, morally, and politically, and this will take many long years, and before the goal is reached the country will have to pass through much trouble and suffering.

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